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THE · MIDDLE · YEARS

KATHARINE : TYNAN

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THE MIDDLE YEARS

To the one with whom those years were passed

T987m

THE MIDDLE YEARS

BY

KATHARINE TYNAN

AUTHOR OF
"TWENTY-FIVE YEARS : REMINISCENCES"

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This volume, though complete in itself, in some of its allusions to persons and places takes for granted in the reader an acquaintance with the Author's previous volume of Reminiscences, "Twenty-five Years."

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THE MIDDLE YEARS

CHAPTER I

1891—92

There were funeral airs over those days after the death of Mr. Parnell. I have never been able to look at white chrysanthemums since without seeing a grave. It was autumn, and winter weather in the world and in our hearts.

"Sheep without a shepherd when the snow shuts out the sky"—that was what we were; and all we could do was to render pious offices to the dead.

There was a ladies' committee to keep the grave. How well I remember going up to Glasnevin of a late autumn afternoon with a burden of flowers. By the grave itself one was not afraid, but once, as I left the cemetery with one companion, and that a woman, in the gathering dusk I was scared by a small tap-tapping down the long avenues of the dead. It was like the withered leaves which follow you down a dark road on an autumn afternoon, pitter-patter, like the tiny feet of little ghosts. There was really something following—a folded MS. which had fallen from a pocket of my cloak and held on by my skirt.

We were not in favour with the heads of the Catholic Church in those days. For some of us it was a poignant difference: none of us liked it. But it gave, perhaps, the final touch of exaltation to our devotion. All were not so brave as we were. There came to us offerings from *grandes dames* among the Dublin Catholics. We did not blame their desire to be anonymous. We were not exacting in those days. Our sore hearts were warm to those who were with us, even if they preferred anonymity. Wives of Government officials, ladies whose families were identified with all that was against the National Movement, sent us flowers and money for the upkeep of the grave. The romantic figure of the Irish Chief had an extraordinary fascination for women —for good women.

It is characteristic of my state of mind then that for many days after that fatal 6th of October my little diary of work and play remained unfilled. Presently the entries began again. I must have been well started in literature. I was approved by those whose approval was best worth having. I was writing for the *Anti-Jacobin* under Frederick Greenwood; for the *National Observer* under Henley. I was contributing sketches of Irish country life to the *Speaker*. I was really doing remarkably well considering that I had not yet published a volume of prose, excepting my " Life of a Nun," which had been torn to rags and tatters by the Anti-Parnellite organ, the *National Press*, to the great distress of the poor nuns for whom this biography of one of their number had been written.

How kind the great men were in those days to the young aspirant! Here is a letter from Frederick Greenwood, dated December 2, whether 1891 or 1892 I am not sure.

> " Yes, my dear Miss Tynan, this I do call a 'more than pretty' piece of verse. It is in the printer's hands. You shall have a proof. For, it may be well to put in a note about the superstition on which it is founded. And I fancy I spied one of your lines running off upon two more feet than properly belong to it.
>
> " Yours faithfully,
>
> " F. GREENWOOD."

I find on looking up my own diary that it was 1891, and my first acceptance from the *Anti-Jacobin*, to which I contributed regularly during its too short life.

Another piety of those days was to the newspaper which Mr. Parnell had been about to launch when he died. The first meeting of its promoters had taken place while he was with us. Immediately after his funeral there was a large meeting at the Rotunda. The great funeral of the day before had stiffened the backs of the weak and satisfied those who were for expediency. Dublin certainly was with us. "What Dublin thinks to-day Ireland will think to-morrow," we used to say in the beginning of the struggle; and the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* had said triumphantly: "We have the League; we have the newspaper; we have the Chief." Well, those days of hope and cheer were past. We had lost the Chief. We had lost—not the League; Timothy Harrington had kept that for us, more than any other man—but we had lost the Party. We had nine "Stalwarts," as we liked to call them. The *Freeman's Journal* had ratted. The country had followed the priests. But the Dublin meeting that day—the 12th of October—was a large and enthusiastic one, and the paper started under favourable auspices.

The paper was our bantling. Someone had bought a Hoe printing machine at a great reduction. It looked all that a printing machine ought to be. An expert from the Hoe Company came to place it in position. The first issue of the paper promised to be a great success. There were big contracts for advertisements. We longed for the advent of that paper which should be a vindication of our Chief and his policy.

All was ready, when a dreadful thing happened. The Hoe was holding a reception. All the leading Parnellites in Dublin were there to welcome the first issue of the paper. Did they begin with the evening paper, the *Herald?* I have an idea that they did. It seems unlikely that I should have been present at the printing of the morning paper. The Hoe at first behaved beautifully. It was a miracle to see it flinging out the printed sheets so easily and smoothly. When, suddenly, it began to devour its children, seizing with a savage wrath on the fine printed pages and tearing them to rags.

There was weeping and gnashing of teeth—the Hoe's teeth that tore our paper to pieces. The enemy got wind of it. Editions of his evening paper began to come out with the solemn item of news in the " Stop press " column : " The Mule has kicked." " The Mule is still kicking." " Despite all the Efforts of the Muleteers, the Mule refuses to leave off kicking."

I remember the Hoe expert in those days and his unmoved air under the cloud of suspicion, the angry and contemptuous glances, which followed him wherever he went. The one who had bought the machine a bargain was scarcely less under a cloud. The Hoe was certainly a fiend. The printing would go on so perfectly—so cleanly efficient—up to the last point, when the awful tearing would begin. I remember covering my face with my hands when it started its work of destruction, after a long anguish of suspense. And still the bulletins came from Abbey Street that the Mule was restive, the Mule was kicking; the Mule was high-kicking ; the Muleteers were at their wits' ends. We laughed when it came to the Muleteers.

The Hoe expert was not at all down in the dust, as we expected him to be. He insisted all the time that the new concrete bed on which the machine was set had sagged, putting the machine out of gear, while we looked at him with eyes of bitter distrust. But he proved to be quite right. The defect was remedied. The Mule gave up kicking, but it was quite a long time before the Muleteers ceased to amuse the enemy in Middle Abbey Street.

I did the reviewing for the *Irish Daily Independent*, the new paper. I used to send in about three columns per week, with an occasional sub-leader. What industry! Whenever the reviews were crushed out—which was often—the "copy" was lost, but I sent in my next week's supply undauntedly. My industry seems to have been prodigious, judging by the entries of work done in my little diary. I was gadding hither and thither. Oh, they were crowded hours, even though the funeral airs blew in them. They were days of good loyalties. How we stuck together! How good it was to meet each other! What a cold, aloof eye we turned on the Anti-Parnellite! We held ourselves the very salt of Ireland. Even yet an old Parnellite will say to another: "When I meet a Parnellite I know I can trust him."

Now and again we had a contested election. I was in bed with influenza—the specially bad influenza of those days—on Christmas Eve, 1891. I find this entry in the little old faded diary: "In bed till evening. News came that Redmond was in for Waterford. Got up, feeling much better." We were all good Redmondites in those days, and used to go about singing "The Boys of Wexford" in honour of the two Redmond brothers.

The one who was almost my dearest friend at that time, whose house was a second home to me, had an Anti-Parnellite husband. He was an old-fashioned, Whiggish Catholic, and, coming of convert stock, he was more a priest's man than the born Catholic. He was a very kind, dear host to me during many happy years, and after one tremendous set-to we had agreed not to discuss politics. He always took the *Freeman*, which at that time I scorned to touch. But the coachman, an old family servant and an Englishman, was a strong

Parnellite and took the *Independent*. When I was staying at that kind house he always obligingly sent me in his *Independent* to read. It gave me great joy when there was a contested election in South Co. Dublin to see Wilson driving his master to vote. The master recorded his vote for the Anti-Parnellite, the man for the Parnellite, so that they might just as well have stayed at home.

One day in that summer of 1892 I came into my own little room and found to my indignation a prominent Anti-Parnellite of the county sprawling on one of my chairs. He had come in with my father, having some business or other with him. My father always turned instinctively to my bright and pretty room: there was some sense of my presence there. I used to come in from an absence to find him asleep in a chair, after a strenuous day, beginning perhaps by rising at 4 o'clock in the morning for market or fair. It is one of my poignant memories of him that when he was growing old it became more and more difficult to waken him, yet he would go off in the dark of the morning, without breakfast, scorning to ask anyone else to wake when he did.

His dear presence was there and dearly welcome as always; but not so the obnoxious Anti-Parnellite, at whom I, standing, glared.

My father, looking about for a match to light his pipe, tried to effect an introduction but failed to remember the visitor's name.

"This is Mr. ——. I'll forget my own name next! What the devil is it? My memory's leaving me completely. He lives up on the hill. You know his name—don't you?"

I did; but I scorned to speak it. Mr. Boylan—that was not his name, by the way—grinned with embarrassment and afforded no assistance.

Meanwhile my dear father went on with various items about Mr. Boylan, designed to assist me to a remembrance of his name, which I knew very well. At last he finished up.

"The d——d fellow went against Parnell. *Now* you know who he is. Why—Boylan, to be sure! My daughter, Mr. Boylan."

There was the Tercentenary of Trinity College that summer, when for several days Dublin bloomed amazingly with brilliant academic hoods and gowns. All learning was in the streets for a few days. There were unusual gaieties at Trinity College or in connection with its celebrations—balls, banquets, garden-parties, entertainments of many kinds. Great men from all over the world were present; and not only laurelled age, but rose-crowned youth, for all the universities had sent deputations of their students, which latter fact very much added to the joys for the Dublin young ladies. Oddly enough the two men who stand out in my memory after the lapse of years are Arminius Vambéry and Lord Dufferin. The latter I thought a person of the most extraordinary fascination. But I did not touch with the great people. My share of the visitors was a Heidelberg student with two or three sword slashes across his face, who promised in later life to be like the Great Tun of Heidelberg—or is it Heidelberg the Tun belongs to?—and a slim fair Swiss from Lausanne. There were very rowdy doings in T.C.D. during that Tercentenary week, but of those I have only, of course, hearsay evidence.

At that time I used to find material for my sketches in the life about me. This I found to be a dangerous practice. My sketches were all idyllic, and, of course, there was a very slight substratum of truth in their happenings. As for the people, they were so idealised from the original suggestion that if any thought he or she had been portrayed, he or she should have been immensely flattered. But, while that might apply to English people it did not to Irish, who are very resentful of exploitation. A sketch of mine called " A House of Roses," the background of which was a picturesque cottage in the dear green country lane that led from the steam tram to my home, gave great offence, because the old couple were childless, and I had invented a son, Pat, who died in Australia. That invention they resented deeply, and the *locale* of the cottage made their resentment an inconvenient thing, since I have a rooted objection to coming up against anything unpleasant. I used to say at that time that I should have to get home by balloon—aeroplanes were as yet undreamt of—since there was a resentful person who had figured in one or other of my sketches waiting for me on every road of approach.

There was a village genius who used to come to see me in those days. He was not a genius, by the way, but only a village shoemaker, tremendously interested in literature. The need to talk would send him rushing over the couple of miles from the village to Whitehall, still wearing his leather apron. I was really and truly good to him. I always welcomed his visits however untimely. I lent him books. I gave him papers. I listened to his strange poems and his views about all manner of things. I had then something of my father's open heart to his world—that true warm hospitality of the mind and heart which could not conceive closing the door upon an appeal for friendship. I fear I have lost something of that golden quality in the hardening process of the years. I believe he and I, in those days, never found anyone a bore. Perhaps we were too keenly interested in people: perhaps we supplied what they lacked.

My poor friend died. One of these village sketches in the *Speaker*—I wrote nothing but idylls in those days—reached his brother and earned for me his undying hatred. That was nothing to smile over. He even hated my dear big, lovable father, who had nothing to do with my transgressions. I had my revenge. The "fierce old father"—that was the phrase which offended, I believe—of the Village Genius came to see me. With unexpected forbearance they had kept him ignorant of my offence. I treated him like a king; and I and the Village Genius are friends to this day: I keep his name in my prayers.

I remember now how I used to criticise his poems and attempt to clarify his too-florid style. I tried to get him to read the Bible—the Old Testament—but he refused, saying that he never knew anyone who talked about the Bible who was not a hypocrite. In those days—perhaps to-day—the Irish Protestants looked upon the Bible as a Protestant book and the Irish Catholic peasants had no doubt of its being an exclusively sectarian production. It had been used against them so often in the hands of their enemies.

To write about Irish people craves wary walking. Last year a young lady in the North of Ireland, who lived on the lands given by Queen Elizabeth to Cecil—the house was later—implored me to put her into a book. She was almost tearful about it. "You can say anything you like," she said; "make me hateful or ugly or anything, only put me in." This showed an excessive desire to see one's self in print. But then she was North of Ireland.

How I have strayed from 1892! The year was not tame for me, despite the *débâcle*, as it might have been under altered circumstances. My diary records Sunday visits from Douglas Hyde, John O'Leary, the Sigersons, George Russell—at intervals Willie Yeats, but he was most of the year away in England. Frances Wynne, too, appears in these entries, but only as a letter-writer. She had married at the end of December, 1891, and gone to live among the drearinesses of Whitechapel, where her husband was a curate. Other names of interest appear as my correspondents: among them W. D. Howells—he was editor of the *Cosmopolitan* for a too-brief period. I thought my fortune was made when through his old friend and mine, Mr. Piatt, he began to ask for my articles. America has dashed more cups of hope from my lips than I care to recall.

There occurs "Joseph Devlin" several times among the entries of letters written and received. What had I to do with that Man o' the North? I cannot the least bit in the world remember. Was he a youth then editing a college magazine? I think our correspondence must have had a literary foundation. Or was it another Joseph Devlin?

We loved John O'Leary all the more because he, the old Fenian chief, had stood by Mr. Parnell. I have some letters of his of that year written in his characteristic telegraphic manner, with all unnecessary words cut out. He used to sit buried in books to the knees. If you paid him a visit, you had to spill the books off a chair before sitting down. Those latter years of his great, simple, peaceful life he took his pleasures in Dublin, as he had taken them in Paris on the Quai d'Orsay (am I right, or is it a confusion with the old bookshops of the Dublin quays?), hunting among the second-hand bookshops. I don't think he ever found a —material—treasure. It would have been quite unlike him; but he found many things to give joy to himself and his friends. Dusty treasure trove—of the spiritual kind—came in bundles between the pages of magazines, in the folds of newspapers. Fanatically high-minded in the conduct of life, he had his little divergences. He invariably cheated the Post Office—a Government office, of course. I record in my diary many an idle morning spent over John O'Leary's clippings; or I had the heart to call them idle.

Nothing of his was ever dusted. Fortunately the freedom from an exact housewifeliness of the Irishwoman prevented anyone undertaking that Sisyphus task.

He used to come on Sundays, walking from Dublin in fine weather. He carried a bottle of tea which he drank on the journey. After that he only wanted his "smoak," as he pronounced it in broad Tipperaryese. Those who accompanied him required fortification on arrival, but he could wait for dinner, which, following the example of the Irish priests—and the eighteenth century—was supposed to take place about 4 o'clock. It was really "when it was ready," quite a movable feast; but since refreshments were always to be had no one need go hungry or thirsty.

Politics almost ousted literature at these Sunday symposia in that year; and the politics were always harmonious, since none came, except once a temerarious lady, who was not Parnellite. Poor lady! She has since appeared on many suffragette platforms of the turbulent days. Perhaps that visit was her preparation.

We were all—led by Willie Yeats—very loyal to John O'Leary, setting him, where he liked to be, on a little pedestal as literary critic and adviser.

The old Fenian chief was very sweet to women. He was apt to be a little intolerant with men. He used to say: "Good God, man, what the devil do you know about it?" And "You display a faultless ignorance of everything under the sun." But a woman could always depend on his kindness. Willie Yeats used to complain in those days that my mind had no speculation in it. I daresay I was irritatingly cocksure to one who went on from speculation to speculation. John O'Leary used to throw back his old lion head and laugh and say "Let her alone; she's all right."

Someone said to me the other day: "Think of John O'Leary spending five years in penal servitude! Good God! What an indictment of our rulers!"

CHAPTER II

FRANCIS THOMPSON

In those days I corresponded, of course, faithfully with my dear Meynells, whose loving friendship is one of the best gifts of my life.

I wish I could lay my hand on the Parnell poems written by Sir William Butler in *United Ireland*, some time in the early part of 1892. Some of them, I believe, were reprinted by Wilfred Meynell in the *Weekly Register*, which he then edited. They were very good fighting poems, and, though they were only signed with a " B," the knowledge of their authorship was as balm to hearts suffering from the loss of the incomparable Leader.

Since I had begun to review for the *Independent* I was in constant touch with books and writers, adding to my already considerable list of friends and acquaintances of like tastes with myself. Francis Thompson was by this time contributing constantly to *Merry England*, a magazine edited by Wilfred Meynell, in which " Dream Tryst " had first arisen upon our amazed eyes with its assurance of a new star of the first magnitude. That had been in the early months of the 'nineties. I had kept my *Independent* readers pretty well acquainted with Francis Thompson's doings. He was as gentle and simple as any young great poet ever was. He was greatly pleased with the things I said about his poems, and I hope my readers were at least equally pleased by their introduction to an immortal. Certainly those were palmy days for the readers of that journal who had a feeling for poetry.

Under date July 20, 1892, I find in my diary—I had apparently returned from one of my usual visits to Dublin—"Letters. F. Thompson . . ." Here follows a list of ordinary names of ordinary correspondents. So simple may memorable happenings seem at the time!

Here is the letter:—

"1, Fernhead Road, Paddington, W.

"Dear Miss Tynan,—It has long weighed on my conscience that I never answered your charming and only too generous letter in which you thanked me for 'The Sere of the Leaf.' The fact is that I am more ignorant than a school-boy of social conventions and so I do not know whether it would be *en régle* for me to write to you without a personal acquaintance. When at length I consulted Mr. Meynell, he told me to wait until you came to London and thank you in person. At that time, you see, he was expecting a speedy visit from you. The result was —unintentionally, I have no doubt—to confirm me in the idea that I should transgress conventions by writing. But you have been so kind and appreciative in reviewing the Manning verses and 'The Making of Viola' in the *Independent*, that I can no longer resist writing to you. The latter review has especially delighted me. I despise the conventional modesty of these days, and see no reason why a poet should pretend to see no merit in his own verse, when in his heart he believes it to be good. When I find a poet doing so, I always exclaim internally:—'What the deuce did you publish it for then? Your only possible justification for cumbering paper with it is that you honestly believed it poetry.' Therefore I frankly say that I think your criticism of 'The Making of Viola' exactly what wanted saying about it, and condensed into a few beautiful words, as only a poet could have done it. Not the least among the alleviations of a not very appreciated lot I count that I should have had some of my poems praised in a few significant words by two poets—yourself and Mrs. Meynell. You have a special right to praise 'The Making of Viola,' for you are partly its parent—not on the poetical, but on the metrical side. It is, as no one is better qualified to discern than yourself, founded on the bold application of a metrical principle which has lain dormant since the decay of the early alliterative metre—what Mrs. Meynell calls felicitously the *tempo rubato* principle. There are but traces of it in Elizabethan poets; and from then to now it has simply dropped out of the knowledge of Englishmen. In late days there has been some revival of it, but it has been an unintelligent revival. Swinburne alone has used it beautifully, though slightly, in a lyric or two; but you beautifully and often. George Meredith has employed it with the most utter and unmusical misconception of its object. Its purpose in the Saxon and early English poets was to vary a set metre. Meredith uses it to constitute the metre, and therefore stereotypes it in most obvious and mechanical fashion. The true law is that you take a metre (the more received and definite the better) and then vary it by the omission of syllables, leaving the lines so treated to be read into given length by pause, and by dwelling on the syllables preceding or following the *hiatus*. The omission of syllables is the exception not the system of the metre; and the art of the poet is shown in skilfully varying the position and manner of the omissions. In this way the most delightful effects of loving, lingering and delicate modulation on the one hand, or airy, dance-like measure and emphasis on the other, may be compassed. But Meredith regularly omits the same syllable, in the same position, in every single line; producing a pendulum-like monotony of insistent beat, instead of the variety which our ancestors employed the device to effect. For instance :—

> 'Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping,
> Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.'

And that triple accent is iterated with clockwork precision in every line, till it becomes a horror, contrary to the most delicate principle of rhythmic music. Now the true use of the principle was first revealed to me by my beloved 'Poppies.' That, and a poem in your 'Shamrocks,' sent me to the early English writers, where I studied the principle at its source, till I had thoroughly grasped its various uses. In 'Viola' I designed to bring out its capacity for dance-like effects. Its capacity for dainty lingering effects I attempted to work out a year ago in a poem unpublished. But I find that you have achieved precisely the same effects as this later poem in St. Francis's hymn in your first published volume. Enough of myself. Only that if there be anything happy in the metre of 'Viola,' you were my mistress in it. You must allow me to say how charming I thought your poem 'Sweets.' That delightful art of repetition, so difficult to achieve, is handled in it with fascinating effect. I hear that you are engaged to be married. Let me wish you all the delight that you have given me by your poems. I can well remember my coming into possession of a copy of 'Poppies.' I found an old *Merry England* containing it on a second-hand bookstall, and the twopence I gave for it was a truer gauge of admiration than many a sovereign. For at that time I was struggling for mere existence, and a penny spent on aught but necessaries of life was a plank removed between me and starvation. Once more thanking you for all your kindness, which includes a most appreciative notice of my verses on the Cardinal, I will conclude this letter, which I hope you will neither resent as an intrusion, nor for its lateness, nor yet for the space I have wasted in lecturing you on a point of metre where you are far better qualified to instruct me.

"Yours always sincerely,
"FRANCIS THOMPSON.

"Excuse my writing to you on *Merry England* paper, which happened to be the only note-paper at hand when I took up my pen. Forgetting that I had just changed my lodgings, I unthinkingly began by putting my former address at the head of my paper.

"July 18, 1892."

He had done me the immense honour to make a poem for me and my poems, "The Sere of the Leaf," which appears at page 192 of the first volume of his "Collected Works" (Burns and Oates, 1913).

I had not at that time seen Francis Thompson; but it fell to the lot of one who was coming from London to spend Christmas at my old home to take charge of the poet from Euston to Chester on his way to Pantasaph, the Franciscan Monastery in the Welsh hills which was the birthplace of "The Daisy," "The Poppy," and others of the poems. Stay! I am wrong about "The Daisy." That was written at Storrington, another monastery, amid the Sussex Downs. Much of the beautiful poetry of those early years was written at Pantasaph, but exactly what poems Everard Meynell must say.

The history of the finding and saving of Francis Thompson by the Meynells is an oft-told tale, and I shall not dwell upon it. But I would like to say, as one who knows, to anyone who thinks the discovery and saving of the poet a happy accident which might have befallen any man, that no other man would have done what Wilfred Meynell did for this poor child of genius. The poet was very troublesome. Few ordinary—or even extraordinary—English households would have endured the disarrangement of all its order, all its conventions, as the Meynell household did; and did gaily as well as tenderly. Francis Thompson sat up all night and slept all day. He disregarded engagements and conveniences, his own included. When he was due to lunch out they began calling him at 8 o'clock and continued at five minutes' interval, so that there might be a reasonable hope of his stirring at 12. The children, who had their father's whimsical humour, much enjoyed, I believe, this harrying of the poet and were very energetic about it. I fear I enjoyed the tale nearly as much. Why is it that one loves to tease a poet? I can see him now in his ugly yellow-brick suit striding about the drawing-room at Palace Court, his dirty pipe in his fingers when it was not between his lips, an odd figure in the household the lady of which was the most exquisite of women.

Of that railway journey my informant recalls that the person who handed him over Francis Thompson, a young clerk from the office of the *Weekly Register*, had provided him with reading for the journey in the shape of a great bundle of *Weekly Suns*, the lively paper which Mr. T. P. O'Connor presided over at that time. The poet did not avail himself of this distraction of the journey.

Presently some Irish harvesters got in at Rugby. They were rather tipsy and rather noisy: the other Irishman of the party resented their conduct as an offence to his national pride, and wished them most heartily anywhere else. Not so Francis Thompson. He had gone through at least the preliminaries of a medical training, and his professional interest was excited by the injured hand, filthily bandaged, of one of the harvesters. He had the bandage off. Some water was found. He washed the hand carefully, tearing up his handkerchief in strips for bandages, all in the most painstaking, gentle way.

While he saw to the wound there was a tiny flutter and stirring in a parcel wrapped in brown paper belonging to the patient.

"What have you there?" asked the poet with lively interest. He shared with Willie Yeats the quality of curiosity. "A bird?"

"It is, your honour. Just a little birdeen that I'm takin' home to the childher in the Co. Mayo."

"Let me see him."

Off came the brown paper, and a little green-yellow canary with bright, frightened eyes was discovered. The canary had a beautiful song, according to his owner, but he could not be won to break silence, although his brother poet chirruped and whistled to him with all his might in the endeavour to make him sing.

At Crewe the harvesters insisted on getting out for refreshments, despite the poet's anxious assurances that there really was not time, that they would be left behind. The other Irishman hoped they might be. Their behaviour would not be improved by the refreshments. He had been making up his mind to a most disagreeable journey in which conviviality should easily pass to quarrelsomeness. The poet hung from the window while the whistle shrieked and the clapping of doors came nearer. The train was already in motion when the first of the harvesters appeared at the refreshment-room door. The party was left behind.

The other Irishman repented of his first impulse of satisfaction at the accident almost immediately. He had time to remember that they too were going home, and that someone's Christmas would be the sadder for their absence. while the poet poured out his concern as though the Irish harvesters were the most desirable companions in the world. The still small voice that reproached the other Irishman became acute, peremptory, when a tiny chirp proceeded from the cage.

"There is the bird!" cried the poet. "What is to become of the bird?"

The other Irishman vowed that the bird should be given to the safe keeping of the station-master at Holyhead. Francis Thompson left him at Chester, going off in the company of a black-bearded Capuchin. The promise about the bird was faithfully kept. One wonders if the little traveller ever reached the Mayo bogs after all.

My informant recalls that at his next meeting with Francis Thompson, a long time afterwards, his first word was about the bird.

These two at this later date were fellow-guests under the most kindly hospitable of roofs. The other one recalls again how he and Francis Thompson shared a passion for cricket, so that the drawing-room at Palace Court was bestrewn with late, cricket editions of the evening papers.

The poor poet was very human, very like his fellows, and always so simple, despite his high heritage. It is a long look forward to the Spanish-American war, when we were strongly pro-Spanish. So was the Meynell household, except Mrs. Meynell, who was tepidly pro-American—one could not help thinking because of private friendships and affections. We had a very small, weirdly quaint dog named Paudeen, whom our friends will remember. His was not a personality to be easily forgotten. We used to send him hunting for American cats in the Meynells' drawing-room. "Find an American cat!" would send him into ecstasies of hunting. The Meynells and the poet looking on thought it very clever of him, and of us to have taught him the trick. No one ever thought of sending him to look for a Spanish cat, nor suspected that it was the cat counted and not the nationality.

Miss Agnes Tobin, a great friend of Mrs. Meynell's, was grieved at our pro-Spanish sympathies. " Is there no one to stand up for America ? " she asked passionately.

" Indeed there is," said the poet, stuttering in his anxiety to get it out. " Indeed there is. I assure you that if you will come with me this moment, I will take you to at least thirty public-houses in the immediate neighbourhood of this house where the sympathy is overwhelmingly for your country."

Miss Tobin did not accept the invitation.

One can hardly over-estimate what the family life must have meant to the poor poet—the whimsical, kindly father, the exquisite mother, the lovely children like Murillo angels, so ripe and soft their colouring, so gracious their contours. Viola, then Prue—for whom "The Making" was done—had her time of coldness towards the poet, due to a misunderstanding. She was an enchanting child, and she did not want a brown dress ; and the poet had written

" Spin, Daughter Mary, spin,
A brown tress for Viola."

It was too early for distinctions of d's and t's, and Viola wept passionately because the poet had invoked for her a dress of the detested colour.

CHAPTER III

JOHN O'LEARY AND OTHERS

BEFORE passing away from this year I should like to make some extracts from letters, received then or a little earlier, written by people interesting in one way or another. From the old Fenian chief John O'Leary I take the following extracts from very characteristic letters. The first is written from Cork in February, 1890, soon after his sister's death.

> "I shall be probably for about two weeks in the country, then for a couple of weeks in Dublin, or at least such time as may be needed to exercise a certain supervision over Ellen's poems while going through the press. After that I go to London, in a certain sense to seek my fortune, or at least some fortune, and in any case to live in a quieter and cheaper way than would be easy in Dublin. This,—I believe I told you,—necessitated by the villainous action of —— and Co. over Tipperary and Smith Barry. When (or if) answering give me some Dublin gossip. Got little since I left except some in a letter from Ashe King. Sigerson never writes at all, and Taylor" [a brilliant Dublin barrister and writer] "most sparingly. Same may be said of O. and other common acquaintances. Not that, to tell truth, I don't get enough or more than enough letters from all points of the compass save this one."

The spectacle of this dear old Don Quixote going out to seek his fortune in London makes me smile, but ruefully, as one smiles at the Don; and also at the simplicity which conceived Dublin to be a more expensive place to live in than London. He and his sister had lost a good deal of the provision for their old age through the folly of "New Tipperary" which ruined a once flourishing town.

The next letter shows him embarked on his new enterprise; and it is written in a tilting mood:

"11, Bayley Street, Bedford Square,
"June 10, 1890.

"I was sorry not to see you before I left and sorry that I have no prospect of seeing you before end of year. Indeed, I'm sorry—which is a sorry state of mind—for most things just now and glad of very few. Among the few, cheap issue of little book, now for first time with chance to sell." (The book was "Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland," contributed to by W. B. Yeats, Douglas Hyde, Ellen O'Leary, and pretty well the whole writing band in Dublin just then.) "Saw the two notices in *Nation* and ——. Pass the *Nation* which has good reason to log-roll for D. H. and no conscience about it or anything else; and besides I'd sooner have thing on J. O'M."—(Douglas Hyde's fine poem on John O'Mahony the Fenian, which I have heard John O'Leary say exactly mirrored the mind of him whom Douglas Hyde had never known)—"quoted than any other part of the book. And pass both notices of your own poem, though I think they do it more than justice, or at least more than relative justice. Your fame will scarcely depend upon that. But what absolute absurdity about C. P. 'Unexpected sort of beauty'!!! Well that bangs Banagher, and you know what Banagher bangs. You must be proud of the connection of your two names. Can —— have written or even read this? I knew or at least believed that he was but poor judge of poetry, but to believe that he could be like that—even with all my belief in him—is a thing which I cannot believe."

Apparently the reviewer had failed to do justice to Ellen O'Leary.

"Now a few words about myself. I am much as I was, no worse, if, I fear, little better. I am slowly wading through my Reminiscences, with little satisfaction to myself and with what I fear will prove little to the satisfaction of the public. Most certainly there will be nothing 'epoch-making' about them. I am reading Duffy's"—(Sir C. Gavan Duffy)—"'Davis' and another book with an eye to reviewing, but I fear 'tis little writing I'll ever do and fear 'tis mostly not easy to find a market for that little. But, after all, the thing cannot so much matter in the long run, and the run cannot be so very long now. Of others that we know in common not much to say, and feel confident what is to be said to you has been said by young Yeats. I've dined out somewhat—with Mrs. John Richard Green, among others—and been bid to some 'at homes,' among them one at Stopford Brooke's, and suppose shall have more such distraction (which is good in so far as it is that) as time goes on. I don't know on earth what Sigerson is doing about getting out my sister's poems. He and Taylor probably the worst correspondents living."

I had apparently been entertaining him with an account of my experiences with a club or society of learned ladies—more or less. There was one of which I might have been president if the promoters had not doubted my seriousness. They used to discuss the deepest matters. I was cut off from even ordinary membership for bringing Liberty patterns to a debate and handing them around for inspection by the weaker sisters. My male friends without exception took my side in the matter.

He writes :—

"As to the club—" (*was* it a club ?) "with its debates on machinery and its gloomy girl graduates, presumably with or without, 'golden hair,' I am happily away from them, but I can sympathize with you and others to whom —— must be a sore affliction."

The context shows that it cannot after all have been my Debating Society, which never called itself a club.

"I suppose you owe the ladies to Miss —— rather than to ——. To some people anything tiresome, bothersome, and generally uncivilized may safely be attributed.

"On reading over your letter now before I write this, I am sorry to realize more than I did before Miss Mulholland's bereavement. She wrote me a very kind note a short time ago, and in answering I showed no consciousness of her sorrow. My own made me selfishly forgetful. I wish when you see her you would tell her this. I might of course write myself, but that might seem strange and somewhat belated. Anyway whether she comes to know or not there are few amongst my later friends whom I like more and who seem to me so absolutely blameless.

"What you say of our three young friends I, of course, keep to myself. A—— I liked almost least of the young fellows, although I have had never any special fault to find with him save that perhaps like your College misses he seemed somewhat cold-blooded. B—— from the little I saw of him I liked well and thought him very level-headed : of his heart I know little or not at all. C—— I always thought kind-hearted and clear-headed enough when he wrote, though queerly grotesque and if not puzzle-headed at least somewhat inconsequent in his talk. All this may seem somewhat superfluous, save only that all Irish young fellows with brains have, from the Irish point of view, an interest, mostly painful, for me.

"I, of course, forwarded your letter to Sir C. Gavan Duffy, and was glad to know he had sent you his 'Davis' as showing he still felt that interest in you which he expressed the day I brought you to him at the Shelbourne.

"I'm always in good health and possibly in somewhat better spirits, but there is little to boast of (queer verb !) in that way. I'm getting on though slowly with my book.

"I have now got nearly to the end of paper, time and patience, so must draw to a close.

"What about your own holy book ?"—(*i.e.*, the "Life of a Nun" upon which I was then engaged). "I hope you are not allowing it quite to distract or abstract your mind from things profane. I suppose you hear more or less regularly from young Yeats. But anyway I may leave him to tell his own story : I may however say that he is busy upon Blake and other things.

"Have heard from —— this morning and seem to have stirred him up to some sort of activity by what he crudely calls my 'abuse' ; which though rather strong language is what it was not. But what he thinks of my language, or for matter of that myself, matters little."

I think he must have returned to Ireland from that "seeking his fortune"—as though he should ever find any but an immortal imperishable one—to the Parnell struggle at the end of 1890. He had been critical before of Mr. Parnell's leadership. One remembers his story of how Parnell asked Kickham, the old blind novelist, poet and Fenian, if he thought Ireland could be roused on the question of the Land. "Roused ! " said Kickham ; "I'm only afraid they'd go to the gates of hell for it." John O'Leary used to tell the story, flinging back his fine old head. "We are not a transacting party," he used to say of the Fenians in those days of inactivity, yet a blundering person excited his undying resentment by calling him and his movement "unpractical." He was an amazingly simple and candid leader of a secret revolutionary movement. In fact, so candid was he that one sometimes smiled over the thought of him as a conspirator. I have often observed extraordinary candour in men to whom big issues are entrusted. Of course it might well be that the candour is restricted to individuals; indeed it must be, for he would be a conspirator or a statesman *â rire* who would go babbling secrets about the street. Where such men trust they trust nobly.

The Parnell struggle was just the distraction the old Chief needed. It made him young again. He had stood aloof from the Land Movement, dreading and despising it. But he was not what he was, although he would have risked all things for his soul's sake, to enjoy being unpopular. Now he was on the popular side, with his soul saved. It gave him new life, bracing up energies which the loss of his sister had all but broken.

At the Sunday symposia at Whitehall he was much in evidence. I remember some of his *obiter dicta.*

"No man of intellect," he said once, when a prominent total abstainer, but a good Parnellite, was present, "can possibly recommend total abstinence for these countries, because of the climate." Everyone laughed. The total abstainer good-humouredly asked him where he placed Cardinal Manning. "I ought to have said," he replied, "no man of the higher intellect. Manning was not that. Why, good Heavens, man, what the devil do you mean by advocating total abstinence in a climate like ours or Scotland's: where the climate is dry no one wants whiskey."

The same total abstainer was advised by a young journalist at another Sunday dinner to start a new movement. The journalist had been describing the horrors of the "bluestone" whiskey, which, in his native North, drove men mad at fairs and markets.

"You'll never make the Irish total abstainers," he said. "You would be a benefactor to your country if you would help to turn the temperance societies into Societies for Promoting Pure Whiskey." As he said it his eyes glowed with the rapture of vision. "I see," he went on, "Ireland a transformed country, streams of pure whiskey flowing north, south, east, and west, the people happy and contented, the country prosperous, crime a thing of the past, etc., etc." There was some truth in this madness, as even the total abstainer recognised.

I find a couple of A. E.'s letters about those years, 1890, '91, '92. He had not arrived then at being A. E. nor at dating his letters. He was a tall, weedy, gentle boy with the light on his face which is there to-day. And he wrote a fine commercial hand, very unlike—in fact without any resemblance whatsoever—to the difficult writing of to-day.

> "I was sorry I was unable to come last evening. But it will not make much difference about my not seeing Willie Yeats, as I intend opening communication with him through the medium of the astral light—that, is by thought-transference between Dublin and London. No doubt he will have imagination (!) enough to think he is receiving messages from me, and whenever I write to him about these airy conversations I will use expressions which will suit his conversation at any time. 'Your poem is splendid'; 'your paradoxes are getting more startling every day.' These remarks will convince him more than ever of my occult powers, and he will tell everyone that I can hear his smallest whisper over a thousand miles away and exalt me generally above Madame Blavatsky.
>
> "It was very kind of you to write to me. Cutting the panel down will not harm it in the least. But I will take care to measure the next more correctly."

I have no memory about the panel, but he must refer, I think, to one of the early pictures he gave me, which may have been intended to fit a panel of my door. My friends were most generous in decorating the pretty room which I have described in "Twenty-Five Years." George Russell gave me in all some ten or twelve pictures. I cannot remember that I ever used any of them as a panel.

He refers to the panel again in a second letter, in which the Irish confusion between "shall" and "will" may be observed.

> "The panel was so tame that I became disgusted with it and commenced another subject which I think is more respectable. I will be finished in two or three Sundays more when I will bring it to you. Forgive my not appearing yesterday. It was snowing so heavily all the morning that had I started I would have been a most miserable draggled specimen of a Theosophist at the time of my reaching you."

I don't think he came much during the Parnellite days. Probably the violent politics frightened him away, as Irish violence frightened away the nightingales, according to William Allingham's theory. Yet inside the door of my little room poetry still harboured. Willie Yeats, in London that year, came and went. He always became abstracted at the dinner-table when politics were uppermost and retired into himself murmuring poetry. Within the precincts he would escape gladly into the open sea of poetry. He would take down book after book from my little Chippendale bookcase of the Trafalgar period and read poetry aloud, till even the poetry-making circle began to feel itself ill-used. Then I would take the book from his hand, replace it in its shelf, turn the key, and suspended life would begin to flow again.

George Russell talks about Willie's occultism. Such subjects interested him more and more. He had a gentle persistence about the thing he wished to do, and if we would not have poetry we had very often to put up with and take part in occult experiences.

He would seize upon a likely medium, put him or her into a hypnotic state, bid him or her to imagine a yellow square, like a lit window, to pass through and relate what happened beyond.

Sometimes the experiments were interesting—to one who had no belief in them ; sometimes, oftener indeed, they failed. Willie was great on hypnotism in those days. He said he could hypnotise a hen by putting a penny on the ground, drawing a chalk circle about it, and setting the hen to gaze fixedly at that particular spot. The trouble was to catch your hen and to persuade her to gaze fixedly. In default of an obliging hen he tried the experiment on my Pom. Having assured me that the dog could not possibly move, he was hardly taken aback when the dog got tired of it and walked away. There was a certain effrontery about his disappointments.

All times and places were chosen for those *séances*. Once it was of a summer night while we waited for the steam tram that was to bear our visitors away to town. I was sitting—not unaccompanied—on a grass bank the other side of the road. Willie Yeats and a party were resting on the raised tram-track where he was hypnotising someone ; and a more undesirable place to be hypnotised in, with the steam tram coming nearer every minute, could not well be imagined.

Out of the scented darkness the voices came across the road.

Willie—very eager : " Yes, yes, that is quite right. Now look again. What is it that you see ? "

The hypnotised, in a muffled voice : " I see a leg."

Willie : " Male or female ? "

The whistle of the tram, rushing round the corner, Juggernaut-wise, put an end to the *séance*.

Another time an athletic youth, being hypnotised, saw in the flowery meadow beyond the golden window a pair of skulls. Willie was tremendously excited. We were all a little bit thrilled. "Skulls! Describe them!" Willie said in a solemn voice. "They are just ordinary rowing sculls." What a drop that was.

Another time Willie was hypnotising someone in Dr. Sigerson's study in Clare Street. The medium was very hypnotic. She had been able to communicate with the other world through Planchette—and a duller way of calling up the dead I cannot imagine. On this occasion she was gazing into a magic crystal which Willie had discovered somewhere in some marvellous manner. Dr. Sigerson was standing by quietly, humorously observant. "I see something golden." "Yes, yes, something golden—what is it like?" "I cannot see clearly. There are golden letters of great size. There is a golden bar, and great jewels as big as a tea-tray, of the most glorious colour." "What else?" "I see a gigantic figure. He extends great white arms above his head. He moves his arms this way and that way. He is between me and the golden letters. I cannot read them. The great jewels flash dazzlingly."

At this point Willie's excitement was prodigious. But further developments were prevented by Dr. Sigerson's remarking in his cool, dry voice: "If you will come out of the magic crystal you will see that a man is cleaning the windows of the Medical Hall opposite. There is a brass bar below and gold lettering above. The sun is shining on the big coloured bottles. The man is in his shirt-sleeves. That is what you see in the crystal."

Willie was always extremely patient and gentle with our scepticism. I can see him turning away with a little laugh—when his experiment had failed. But he was not in the least dismayed or disillusioned. For some years he drifted from one occultism to another—to the thickening of that cloud of dreams which lay ever about him.

CHAPTER IV

W. B. YEATS: LETTERS

The Yeats family left Dublin for London somewhere, I imagine, about the end of 1887 or the beginning of 1888. My correspondence with Willie was a very steady one from that onward to 1893, the year of my marriage. After that Bedford Park was not so far away from Ealing, so the correspondence more or less dropped and never again became regular, although it has been intermittent during the years since. A letter from 6, Berkley Road, Regent's Park Road, must be, I think, the first I received from the poet after the change. It is dated Wednesday, 27. The poet never, of course, dated his letters properly, with the result that my quotations are placed in a very haphazard way.

> " I feel more and more that we shall have a school of Irish poetry, founded on Irish myth and history. I have written a couple of ballads which will probably appear in the *Gael.* Did you like my Fionn article, or has it appeared ? . . . London is just as dull and dirty as my memory of it. I do not like it one whit better. You will see by the heading of this letter that I am in lodgings by myself, our house being still in disorder. I like being by myself greatly. Solitude having no tongue in her head is never a bore. She never demands of us sympathies we have not. She never makes the near war on the distant. . . .
>
> " You see we are a divided family at present. Rose " (their devoted servant, who has been with them through all wanderings and vicissitudes) " is sullen and home-sick—this latter we are all a little, I think."

A few words here about Rose are permissible, since she was so much associated with the fortunes of the Yeats family. She was for years the presiding domestic genius, the homely guardian angel of a family too highly endowed with the gifts of the spirit to be very efficient in mundane affairs. She was of the old type of Irish servants who shared all the joys and sorrows of the family they served. She was, in the sense that Stevenson used the phrase of " His Nurse, Alison Cunningham," second mother to this family of gifted children, among whom I include the parents. She managed their finances so far as she could. She loved them and cared for them and scolded and bullied them. " Rose is never afraid of us," said Mr. Yeats once, " but we are very often afraid of her." We used to say that his extravagantly good opinion of servants as a class was because he saw them through Rose-coloured spectacles.

The next letter is dated May 8, and is from Eardley Crescent, Kensington, where the Yeatses were for a year or so after they left Dublin.

" A few more paragraphs will finish the article on your book " (" Shamrocks," my badly-named second volume of poems), " which may be out any day now, I suppose. R——, acting on my suggestion, has sent a review to the *Academy*." (I had probably given Willie a set of proofs.) " I hear he does not like the religious poems and thinks ' Diarmuid and Grania ' not like Ferguson, which is true, and therefore not as good as it might be, which isn't true, for all imitation is barren. I am sorry I made any suggestion in the matter.

" I was in the House of Commons last Friday night. Healy made a rugged passionate speech, the most human thing I heard. I missed Dillon, however. Altogether I was delighted with Healy: the others, on both sides, were sophisticated and cultivated: in him there was a good earth-power.

" I hear Burne Jones is a furious Home Ruler, says he would be a dynamiter if he was an Irishman.

" I wrote two letters, one to you and one to Miss O'Leary, and then threw them aside meaning to re-write them, but someone found the Miss O'Leary one and posted it, or else I did myself in sheer absence of mind, unless an eastern Mahatma carried it through the air, ' travelling on the pure cold wind and on the waters wan.' I have written to Miss O'Leary to ask if he put on a stamp. . . .

" I suppose nothing has changed with you except outer

Nature. The wild briar roses must be holding their festival through all your lanes. . . .

"I liked Mr. —— when I met him. Do not mind what I said in that letter. I see everything through the coloured glass of my own moods, not being, I suppose, very sympathetic.

"I was at Morris's again since I wrote and I like Morris greatly, though I find much in his philosophy of life altogether alien. He talks freely about everything. He called the English 'the Jews of the North.' He seems really worshipped by those about him, by young S—— especially, who carries it so far that when he was telling Rhys about his engagement to Miss —— he said: 'She is very beautiful. Morris says so, you know,' taking Morris's opinion as final on all matters, and indeed the only opinion. Meanwhile Morris denounces hero-worship, praising the Northern Gods at the expense of the Greek because they were so friendly, feasting and warring with man and so little above him. . . .

"Writing articles seems not very satisfactory. I have two long ones still waiting the decision of editors. One has been a month waiting, the other nine months; besides a few old poems here and there. Sorry I did not begin besieging editors a year or two ago, but it has been my misfortune never to have faith in success or the future. I have a few more things to do for the book—a few lines to add,—then I begin an Irish story. I do not believe in it, but it may do for some Irish paper and give me practice.

"There is a robin singing the dirge of yesterday's rain outside my window—the most cheerful creature I have seen these many days; and I see only the rain that is coming."

(I do not know if this story was "John Sherman," which came out in Mr. Fisher Unwin's Pseudonym Series with "Dhoya"—a "prose poem," as we used to call it in those days. It is long since I have read "John Sherman," but my memory of it is of a minutely-observed, quiet, masterly study of the life of a West of Ireland town, which would be Sligo. I wish "John Sherman" were reprinted. I want to see it again, but my Pseudonym—Mr. Fisher Unwin gave me a set in a case before I was married—has long disappeared.)

"I am reading up for my romance, 'Eighteenth Century,' all day long. I should dream of it only I do not dream much.

I am very cheerful over it. Making my romance I have so much affirmative in me that even that little wretch S—— with his atheisms and negations does not make me melancholy or irritable. . . . I have gone there" (to the British Museum) "every day for some time. To-day I did not go, feeling tired. After breakfast I got out on the roof under the balcony and arranged a creeper that climbs over it. Everything seemed so delighted at the going of the East Wind—so peaceful and delighted. It almost seemed that if you listened you could hear the sap rising in the branches,—bubble, bubble . . .

"I send you a copy of Morris's play. It is a little soiled, as it is one of those used by the actors. No others to be had. He is writing another—of the Middle Ages this time. Horne of the Hobby Horse says that Christina Rossetti has a wonderfully high opinion of your poems.

"I met John Burns and his wife at Morris's Sunday evening —a fine black-bearded man full of zeal,—a sailor once,—denounced Leighton's pictures,—the reason came out after a bit —the paddle of the boat in 'Arts of Peace' at South Kensington much too large."

"April 20.*

"Last night I went with Mrs. Todhunter to a meeting of a women's political association, an invitation I accepted in sheer absence of mind, having no knowledge of the fact till Mrs. Todhunter told me of it. However, I there heard your friend T. P. Gill. He is not much used to speaking, I fancy; his sentences come out rustily. I talked to another friend of yours, Miss Mabel Robinson. But too short a time to learn anything of herself or her opinions. . . .

"Tuesday I had one of my collapses, having done over much walking and reading. I walk most of the way to the British Museum. I stopped therefore at home that day, and being under orders to do little reading I planted seeds in pots all round the balcony, sweet-pea, convolvulus, nasturtium and such like—and in the garden a great many sunflowers, to the indignation of Lily and Jack, who have no love for that retiring plant. Do you remember how they used to mock at me because when we were here before I said I would have a forest of sunflowers and an underwood of Love-lies-bleeding? And there were only three sunflowers after all? Well I am having my revenge. I planted the forest and I am trying to get the Love-lies-bleeding, and they say they don't like Love-lies-bleeding a bit.

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* I am inclined to think that this letter, and perhaps the preceding one, belongs to 1889, after the family had moved to Bedford Park.

"I thought I was in for a considerable collapse, but it wore off. I could only speak with difficulty at first. I was the same way, only worse, when finishing 'Oisin.'

"How the robins and sparrows in the Virginia creeper are singing away. When you read this in your own little room your robins will be singing away likewise and the sparrows chirping. Mine are all busy making their nests, carrying away small twigs from off the balcony and sometimes tugging at a green turf in the garden beneath. I wonder what religions they have. When I was a child and used to watch the ants running about in Burnham Beeches I used often to say 'What religion do the ants have?' They must have one, you know, yet perhaps not. Perhaps like the Arabs they have not time. Well, they must have some notion of the making of the world."

"May [probably 1888].*

(This letter is mainly taken up with the little volume "Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland," which we with a number of our friends had produced and published in Dublin. He goes on:—)

"I think you will be right to make your ballad Irish. You will be so much more original—one should have a speciality. You have yours in Ireland and your religion."

"ROSSES POINT, SLIGO.

"You will see by the top of this letter that I am down at Sligo. I reached here Thursday morning about 2 o'clock, having come by Liverpool, but will return by Dublin perhaps.

"Have been making search for people to tell me fairy stories and found one or two. I hope to get matter enough for an article or so. Have you heard about your story yet? I too am resolved to try story-writing but so far have not made a start. My 'King Goll' ought to be out in a day or two, a week at most.

"I saw Mr. Ranking just before I left London and found him very friendly and pleasant. He was much irritated by R——'s review of you in the *Athenæum*. I had almost forgotten what I should have said at the beginning, that Aubrey De Vere sent me his last book. I have been busy reading it and find it wonderfully pleasant and kindly and beautiful. Have you seen it? It came through Father Russell.

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*NOTE.—The writer himself, when I asked his permission, noted that the letters were not according to the proper sequence of time. I append his correction in this and following pages: "Evidently this letter should have come before that on 'John Sherman' a few pages back.—W. B. Y."

"I will, maybe, have the editing of 'Croker's Fairy Tales' for the Camelot Classics, but have been this long time waiting for Rhys to decide.

"How does your article go on? I wish it were an Irish article, though at the commencement, one, I suppose, cannot choose one's subjects always; but remember, by being as Irish as you can you will be the more original and true to yourself, and in the long run more interesting even to English readers.

"I am going now to a farmhouse where they have promised me fairy tales, so I can write no more.

"CHARLEMONT, SLIGO, Sunday.

"As to the place of my birth, I was born in Dublin at Sandymount. As to that Sonnet, here it is:—

'SHE WHO DWELT AMONG THE SYCAMORES.

'A little boy outside the sycamore wood
Saw on the wood's edge gleam an ash-grey feather.
A kid held by one soft white ear for tether
Trotted beside him in a playful mood.
A little boy inside the sycamore wood
Followed a wood-dove's ash-grey gleam of feather.
Noon wrapt the trees in veils of violet weather,
And on tip-toe the winds a-whispering stood.
Deep in the woodland pause they, the six feet
Lapped in the lemon daffodils; a bee
In the long grass: four eyes droop low: a seat
Of moss, a maiden weaving: singeth she:
"I am lone Lady Quietness, my sweet,
And on this loom I weave thy destiny."'

But would not 'Stolen Child' or 'Meditation of Old Fisherman' be much more understandable, or if you wish your man to quote—for in this matter I leave myself wholly in your hands—from my more *literary* work, that song commencing:

'Oh, wanderer in the Southern weather,
Our isle awaits thee, on each lea
The pea-hens dance in crimson feather;
A parrot swaying on a tree
Rages at his own image in the enamelled sea.'

rather a favourite of my own. I cannot recall the whole correctly.

*"Lately between a severe cold and cough and that savage greybeard, Oisin, I have had a bad time of it. Between them

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* "This should have come before that in which I speak of being made ill by finishing 'Oisin.'—W. B. Y."

very sleepless. But now am much as usual. The dog-cart you speak of will do beautifully for my townward excursions. I will shortly let you know when I start, but still have no exact date—dates were the firstborn of Satan mainly. Old Chaos was the only person, old or young, who ever understood freedom properly."

. . . . . .

"Don't be angry with me for not having written. I will like better to stop at Whitehall than anywhere else. Strewn about my desk are the first pages of at least three different letters started on various dates to you, and all left only started, on various excuses. Firstly because—and this is something more than an excuse—I wanted to be able to tell you when I would start from this and my start has depended on two things. First I wanted to finish 'Oisin' before I leave and he has been very obdurate, had to be all re-written once—the third part I mean—but has gone very well to-day. I may finish this week. And also I did not fix a day until I heard from home. However I daresay a week longer here is all I shall stay. But it is very hard for me to fix a day for certain, 'Oisin' being unfinished.

"I suddenly remember that perhaps my putting off my visit to Dublin may inconvenience you as you may wish to go to England—you had some such plan——. If so tell me and I will start in a few days. But if not I will wait till 'Oisin' is finished and one or two other odds and ends. Write and tell me what you are doing and what you have done of late. I am as hungry for news as Robinson Crusoe.

"I must now go for my walk, having but an hour till tea-time."

. . . . . .

This letter is certainly 1888, when I was writing articles for Oscar Wilde's *Woman's World* on the Women of the Poets and had asked Willie's help.

"58, Eardley Crescent, Monday.

"I send the review you ask for. I waited hoping to get some more subtile and suitable words but they would not come. . . . I have been thinking about the women of the poets, but I fear cannot help you much. I have not read any modern verse for so long a time. Swinburne's chief women, Queen Mary in 'Chastelard' and Iseult in 'Tristram of Lyonesse' (which I have read lately) resemble each other much, both passionate and gorgeous animals, one innocent, the other malignant.

Morris's chief woman is I imagine Gudrun, but it is some years since I read the poem and I only dimly remember her. Do you not think that there is a considerable resemblance between the women of all the neo-romantic London poets, Swinburne, Morris, Rossetti and their satellites ? For one thing they are essentially men's heroines with no separate life of their own, in this different from Browning's. Tennyson's are, I believe, less heroic than any of the others and less passionate and splendid, but realised as far as they go more completely, more like actual everyday people; witness Mary Tudor, and the young ladies in 'Idylls of the King.' These are only apologies of ideas, I fear.

"I was at Morris's last night. He says he makes only a hundred a year by his books all told, denounces the British public because he says it only reads scandal and the newspapers.

"P.S.—I have not been reading Browning this long while, but I imagine his heroines are actualised like Tennyson's but are not so much types as his. The heroines of the neo-romantic school are powerful in conception, shadowy and unreal in execution. Browning's and Tennyson's poor in conception, perfectly realised in execution. I send you Morris's Socialist poems in case you have not seen them. . . ."

"Charlemont, Sligo, Friday.

"'Oisin' having come to an end, nothing more remaining than the copying out, I will, if convenient to you, be with you Tuesday next by the train that reaches Broadstone at 4.15 in the afternoon. This finishing of 'Oisin' is a great relief—never has any poem given me such a trouble—making me sleepless a good deal it has kept me out of spirits and nervous—the thing always on my mind these several weeks back.* It seems better now than when I was working it out. I suppose my thinking so badly of it was mainly because of colds and headaches mixing themselves up with the depression that comes when one idea has been long in the mind ; for now it seems one of my successes. Two days ago it seemed the worst thing I ever wrote. A long poem is like a fever, especially when I am by myself as I am down here. This to me is the loneliest place in the world. Going for a walk is a continual meeting with ghosts, for Sligo for me has no flesh and blood attractions, only memories and sentimentalities accumulated here as a child, making it more dear than any other place.

"I was going along the side of the river a few days ago when a man stopped me and said, 'I think I should know you, sir.' I found out he knew me well as a child. He asked me to go for a row with him, saying 'Come, we will tell old yarns.' And with old yarns, mainly fairy yarns, I have filled two notebooks. You shall hear the best when we meet. . . . You have not told me this long time what you are writing, so when I see you you may expect many questions on that head. I myself have nothing to read to you but 'Oisin,' and 'Dhoya,' and some few scraps, but have much to tell of. You have many poems to read, I hope."*

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* "See note on p. 36.—W. B. Y."

. . . . . .

After he has gone back to London :—

"Now I want you to write and tell me about all you are writing and doing. Did that poem get taken by *Blackwoods?* Is your novelette finished? Have you done anything for the ballad-book? How are your dogs? Do you see Miss O'Leary often? Is your book selling well? Do you see Miss Kavanagh and the Sigersons? Is it very hot in Ireland?"

Here Willie has been interviewing a publisher long dead, of whom he gives a graphic portrait.

"I do not much take to him. He proffered much interest in all my doings. I gave I fear monosyllabic answers, not much liking his particular compound of the superciliousness of the man of letters with the oiliness of a tradesman. . . .

"I have much improved 'Mosada' by polishing the verse here and there. I have noticed some things about my poetry I did not know before in this process of correction, for instance, that it is almost all a flight into fairyland from the real world and a summons to that flight. The chorus to the 'Stolen Child' sums it up. That it is not the poetry of insight and knowledge but of longing and complaint—the cry of the heart against necessity. I hope some day to alter that and write poetry of insight and knowledge. . . .

"I was at a sort of Socialistic tea-meeting at Kelmscott House of late and talked a long time to Mrs. Cunninghame Graham, a little bright American. . . .

"We go to our new house, 3, Blenheim Road, Bedford Park, on the 25th of this month. It is a fine roomy house. Bedford Park is the least Londonish place hereabouts, a silent, tree-filled place where everything is a little idyllic except the cockroaches which abound there. The quantity of new wood brings them, and the old wood brings a stray nightingale now and again, says rumour, and certainly thrushes and blackbirds in almost country plenty. I will have a study to myself with one of the white wooden balconies native to that part of the world.

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* **"Several letters at start of Chap. IV. should follow this.—W. B. Y."**

"We have seen Legge once or twice. He and W. H. Crooke were here last night. I met him at Horne's of the 'Hobby Horse.' He had been in the Commission Court when Piggott's escape was announced. He said it was a great scene. Poor Piggott!

"The Piggott affair must have been a blow to some of our Unionist friends. I wish I were back amongst them to see what change is in their opinions, or what loophole they have found. But here I am stranded for I know not how long in this London desert. As soon as ever I find my work beginning to sell somewhat I shall be away out of this to where there is something of green to look at.

"Did I tell you I dined at the National Liberal Club with T. P. Gill? I liked him greatly."

"3, Blenheim Road.

"'St. Francis and the Wolf' is beautiful—most beautiful—it is one of your very best, it has all the beauties of your new manner like 'St. Francis to the Birds.' My father, and indeed we all are delighted with it. It is so temperate and *naïve*, and simple. Like 'St. Francis to the Birds' and 'Fionula,' it has a peculiar kind of tenderness which I think you only among contemporaries understand. It comes from your religion, I suppose, yet I do not find it in other Catholic poetry. Even in your poetry, I think, it has only come this last year or so.

"My story ('John Sherman') goes well; the plot is laid mainly in Sligo. It deals more with character than incidents. Sparling praised it much, thinks my skill lies more in character drawing than incident."

"3, Blenheim Road,
"Bedford Park,
"June, 1888.

"I have got that book of selected fairy tales to do for the Camelot Classics. It must be done by the end of July. The time is too short to make a really good book I fear. I hope to get Davis to edit in Canterbury Poets. I have not yet asked but will if this fairy book looks well when done. All this—the fairy book and plans for Davis book—is not much liked by my father who does not wish me to do critical work. He wants me to write stories. I am working at one as you know. It is almost done now. There is some good character drawing, I think, but the construction is patchy and incoherent. I have not much hope of it. It will join, I fear, my ever-multiplying boxes of unsaleable MSS.—work too strange one moment and too incoherent the next for any first-class magazine and too ambitious for local papers. Yet I don't know that it is ambition, for I have no wish but to write a saleable story.

"Ambitious, no—I am as easily pleased as a mouse in the wainscot, and am only anxious to get along without being false to my literary notions of what is good. I shall only get seven guineas for this fairy-book, but it is very pleasant working for a certainty. Can you send me any suggestions? I am at present extracting tales from Croker, Carleton and Kennedy. Do, like a good Katharine, send suggestions for me. I have written to Rolleston for Lady Wilde's book. Do you know any others or of any odd tales anywhere? There was a book of Irish fairy tales announced about a month ago in the *Pall Mall*. Do you remember its name, etc.? My lecture on Sligo fairies at the Southwark Irish Literary Club went off merrily. Todhunter took the chair. Lady Wilde not being able to come herself sent a folk-lore specialist, a big placid clergyman called Ponsonby Lyon.

"I must write in this letter no more bookish news as I know you think me too little interested in other things. The real fact of the matter is that the other things at present for many reasons make me anxious and I bury my head in books as the ostrich does in the sand. I am a much more human person than you think. I cannot help being 'unhuman,' as you call it, these times. On the rare occasions when I go to see anyone I am not quite easy in my mind, for I keep thinking I ought to be at home trying to solve my problems—I feel as if I had run away from school. So you see my life is not altogether ink and paper. But it is hard to go on industriously writing for the MSS. boxes. It tends to bring about a state of things when one is too idle to be industrious and too industrious to be idle. However I am exemplary at present. I really do at most times a fair amount of work, I think, and have written lately everything with a practical intention, nothing for the mere pleasure of writing, not a single scrap of a poem all these months.

"We have a little cousin staying with us, Geraldine by name. She and Jack keep up a continuous joking together. At dinner they have to be kept quiet almost by force. At the end of our garden is a pleasant shady place between a beech-tree and a chestnut. Jack has put up a hammock there.

"He has another batch of drawings in the *Vegetarian* and is going next Saturday to a picnic given by the Vegetarian Society, I think, to make sketches for the paper."

. . . . . .

"I cannot write much of a letter this time, for we have run short of candles and I have only a little piece, now about coming to an end. It will only last about five minutes at most, and you know what a slow writer I am.

"Do you like Todhunter's 'Children of Lir'? Dowden does not like the metre. Gladstone in acknowledging a copy that was sent him said he had read it all through and praised the metre especially.

"It has been raining all day. I could not get into the Museum and so lost my day. When I wrote you that despondent letter I had one of my dreadful despondent moods on—partially fatigue. To keep happy seems like walking on stilts. When one is tired one falls off and comes down to the clay.

"The wick of the candle has tilted over on its side and will be out in a moment.

"Your friend,
"W. B. YEATS.

"P.S.—I light a match to address the envelope."

• • •

"A great many thanks for the introduction. I am going to Lady Wilde's reception this afternoon. She was not visible—being not yet up, needing, as the servant put it, 'a great deal of rest' when I called last Sunday afternoon. I wonder if I shall find her as delightful as her book. My folk-lore matters wind up next Monday or Tuesday for the present. My introduction and most likely the last few sections of book not going in till later. In the meanwhile I shall go for a few days to Oxford, perhaps to copy an MS. or some such thing in the Bodleian for a friend of York Powell's—a very pleasant little job if it comes to anything.

"Are you ever going to write to me? Do you know it is two months all but two days since you wrote? And I generous-minded person am writing to you now to heap coals of fire. Your letter when it comes will have to be very long or——

"I am writing in the British Museum and the man has just brought me Sir William Wilde's 'Irish Popular Superstitions,' from which I have to make an extract so this note must wind up presently.

"Walter Scott is going to print my fairy-book at once, so it will be out in a month or two—it has been a very laborious business but well worth doing, for all the material for poetry if for nothing else. You and I will have to turn some of the stories into poems. A. E. (the Irish poet) copied out some folk-tales not to be got at this side of the Channel in the National Library. It was very good of him as he has not much time these days.

You see him sometimes, I suppose. Jack is drawing menu cards and race cards. Miss Purser has sold a good many for him; they are very witty little cards some of them.

"What is Miss Kavanagh doing? About yourself! Have you any new ventures in hand? My story waits for its last chapter and will have to wait till immediate work concludes.

"Your friend always,
"W. B. YEATS."

"When you write remember I want to hear much about yourself."

. . . . . .

"August 25th.

"I have at last found time to write. Such work as I have had lately! These last two days I have had to take a rest, quite worn out. 'Æsop'—when it is done I shall get back to my story in which I pour out all my grievances against this melancholy London. I sometimes imagine that the souls of the lost are compelled to walk through its streets perpetually. One feels them passing like a whiff of air. I have had three months incessant work without a moment to read or think and am feeling like a burnt out taper. Will you write me a long letter all about yourself and your thoughts. When one is tired the tendril in one's nature asserts itself and one wants to hear about one's friends.

"Did I ever tell you that a clairvoyant, who had never seen me before, told me months ago that I had made too many thoughts and that for a long time I should have to become passive. He told me beside in proof many things he had no way of hearing of. I have indeed been most passive this long while, feeling as though my brain had been rolled about for centuries in the sea, and, as I look on my piles of MSS., as though I had built a useless city in my sleep. Indeed all this last six months I have grown more and more passive ever since I finished 'Oisin,' and what an eater-up of ideals is passivity, for everything seems a vision and nothing worth seeking after.

"I was at Oxford but was all day busy with 'Æsop.' I dined two or three times with the Fellows and did not take much to anyone except Churton Collins, who, as you remember, attacked Gosse so fiercely—he was there for a few days like myself—a most cheerful, mild, pink and white little man, full of the freshest, the most unreasonable enthusiasms.

"I wonder anybody does anything at Oxford but dream and remember, the place is so beautiful. One almost expects the people to sing instead of speaking. It is all—the colleges I mean—like an Opera.

"I will write again before long and give you some news. I merely write to you now because I want a letter, and because I am sad. My fairy-book proofs are waiting correction."

"Enclosed letter has lain on my table this long while."

"August 30, 1888.

"I have just heard from the Sigersons, who were here last night, that 'Fluffy' is dead and that you have written a beautiful elegy thereon. I am really sorry about 'Fluffy' and look forward to reading the poem in the *Monthly*. The younger Miss Sigerson thought it a very good poem indeed, in your later style and tells me of some others on the stocks.

"She is greatly enthusiastic about Henley's little book, which would be really a wonderful affair if it was not so cobwebby. I have not read the hospital part yet. He had his leg cut off there. Should like him greatly but for the journalists who flock about him. I hate journalists. There is nothing in them but tittering, jeering emptiness. They have all made what Dante calls the Great Refusal,—that is they have ceased to be self-centred, have given up their individuality. I do not of course mean people like O'Brien who have a message to deliver, but the general run of—especially the successful ones. The other night I sat up there without a word out of me trying to pluck up resolution to go, but X—— wanted to see me about something and so I waited. The shallowest people on the ridge of the earth.

"Please do not mind my writing these opinions to you. I like to write to you as if talking to myself.

"P.S.

"Certainly I will try and get to see Mr. Ranking as soon as I can.

"Proofs I will send one of these days with pleasure; just now I am going through them with Todhunter. To-morrow or next day I will send them or the first batches, the rest after.

"I have an amusing piece of news you may not have heard. Charles Johnston has followed Madame Blavatsky's niece to Moscow and there will be married to her. He will be back in London with his wife on October the 8th. They told nobody about it. The girl's mother—says Madame—cries unceasingly and Madame herself says they are 'Flapdoodles.' Johnston *was* in the running for Mahatmaship. And now Theosophy despairs; only the young wife of the dandy philosopher of gesture throws up her eyes and says 'Oh that beautiful young man, and how wicked of Theosophy to try and prevent people from falling in love!' Madame covers them with her lambent raillery. The future Mrs. Johnston is decidedly pretty, with a laugh like bells of silver, and speaks several languages, and is not older than Johnston. If you only heard Madame Blavatsky trying to pronounce Ballykilbeg.

"Your poem on 'Fluffy' is very good, full of unstrained *naïveté*, but will write about it when I see 'The Children of Lir.' Want to catch post now and get some afternoon tea which I hear clattering below.

"This letter is none of your 'cockboats' but a regular 'three-decker' of a letter."

. . . .

"September 6, 1888.

"I got the first 'proof' to-day. I am not very hopeful about the book. I have been I fear somewhat inarticulate! I had indeed something I had to say. Don't know that I have said it. All seems confused, incoherent, inarticulate. Yet this I know, I am no idle poetaster. My life has been in my poems. To make them I have broken my life in a mortar as it were. I have brayed in it youth and fellowship, peace and worldly hopes. I have seen others enjoying while I stood alone with myself—commenting—commenting,—a mere dead mirror on which things reflect themselves. I have buried my youth and raised over it a cairn—of clouds. Some day I shall be articulate perhaps. But this book I have no great hopes of—it is all sluggish, incoherent. It may make a few friends perhaps among people of my own sort—that is the most. Do what you can for it.

"As to what you say of 'a third manner,' a return to early colouring. Certainly your colouring is a great power, but you should be careful to make it embody itself, I think, in easily recognisable natural landscapes as in your 'Children of Lir' and keep it always secondary to the theme, never being a colourist for the mere sake of colour. Average little-read people will say the reverse perhaps to you; but do you not think I am right? The poem you send had that *naïveté* you know how to use so well. The earliest verses are very good indeed; it is all a good little poem, not so good though as the St. Francis one in a late *Irish Monthly*."

Here is a long letter, undated, some time earlier in 1888, judging by allusions to his work at Oxford:—

"You ask me about 'Æsop.' Nutt, the publisher, is bringing out a reprint of a very rare copy published (printed) by Caxton. York Powell, who got me the job, made a mistake and thought the only copy was at Oxford in the Bodleian. And so I had a very pleasant week in his rooms down there. I am now, when folk-lore gives me time, finishing it in the British

Museum. Where by the way I saw Renan yesterday, looking very like an old fat priest.

. . . . . .

*"The other day I met a most curious and interesting man at Madame Blavatsky's, where I go about once every six weeks. Do you remember an interview in the *Pall Mall* with a man called X., an American who came over to England with his wife, to teach gesture, according to the system of some French philosopher? That was the man. We left Madame's at 11 and walked up and down Notting Hill till 1 o'clock in the morning, talking philosophy. He was going to stop with the Shelleys for a while on his return so I shall see more of him. The interesting thing about him is that he is a dandy as well as a philosopher. He is naturally insignificant in looks, but by dint of elaborate training in gesture he has trained himself into quite a striking-looking person. He is the most interesting person I have met at Madame's. As a rule one meets the penitent frivolous there —still frivolous, only dull as well.

"Lately I have read much of George Meredith's poems. They are certainly very beautiful, and have far more serenity and suavity than I had expected. Henley is very cobwebby after them and not very spontaneous. To me Henley's great fault is his form. He is never accidental but always preconceived. His poems are forced into a mould. I dislike the school to which he belongs. A poem should be a law to itself as plants and beasts are. It may be ever so much finished, but all finish should merely make plain that law. Read Meredith's 'Love in a Valley.' It is full of a curious, intricate richness.

"I enclose a couple of lyrics of my own for your opinion. One is made out of three lines of verse I picked up in Sligo."

(The poems are " An Isle in the Water " and " Down by the Salley Gardens.")

. . . . . .

"You would have been much amused at my departure from Oxford. All the while I was there only one thing troubled my peace of mind,—the politeness of the man servant. It was perpetually 'Wine, sir? Coffee, sir? Anything, sir?' At every 'sir' I said to myself 'That means an extra shilling, in his mind, at least.' When I was going I did not know what to give him, but gave him five shillings. Then thought suddenly I had given him too little. I tried a joke. My jokes had so far been all failures with him. It went explosively and I departed feeling I had given more than was expected.

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* "This letter, of course, comes before letter about 'dandy philosopher.'—W. B. Y."

" I have corrected the two first parts of 'Oisin.' The second part is much more coherent than I had hoped. You did not hear the second part. It is the most inspired but the least artistic of the three. The last has more art. Because I was in complete solitude—no one near me but old and reticent people—when I wrote it. It was the greatest effort of all my things. When I had finished I brought it round to read to my uncle George Pollexfen and could hardly read, so collapsed I was. My voice quite broken. It really was a kind of vision. It beset me day and night. Not that I ever wrote more than a few lines in a day. But those few lines took me hours. And all the rest of the time I walked about the roads thinking of it. I wait impatiently the proof of it. With the other parts I am disappointed,—they seem only shadows of what I saw. But the third must have got itself expressed—it kept me from my sleep too long. Yet the second part is more deep and poetic. It is not inspiration that exhausts one, but Art. The first parts I felt. I saw the second. Yet there perhaps too only shadows have got themselves on the paper. And I am like the people who dream some wonderful thing and get up in the middle of the night and write it and find next day only scribbling on the paper.

" I have added to the book the last scene of 'The Island of Statues.' I am sure the 'Island' is good of its kind. I was then living a quite harmonious poetic life. Never thinking out of my depth. Always harmonious, narrow, calm. Taking small interest in people but most ardently moved by the more minute kinds of natural beauty. 'Mosada,' was then written and 'Time and Vivien,' which you have not seen. Everything done then was quite passionless. The 'Island' was the last. Since I have left the 'Island' I have been going about on shoreless seas. Nothing anywhere has clear outline. Everything is cloud and foam. 'Oisin' and the 'Seeker' are the only readable result. In the second part of 'Oisin' under disguise of symbolism I have said several things to which I only have the key. The romance is for my readers. They must not even know there is a symbol anywhere. They will not find out. If they did it would spoil the art, yet the whole poem is full of symbols—if it be full of aught but clouds. The early poems I know to be quite coherent, and at no time are there clouds in my details, for I hate the soft modern manner. The clouds began about four years ago. I was finishing the 'Island.' They came and robbed Nachina of her shadow. As you will see, the rest is cloudless, narrow and calm . . .

"The *Saturday* has reviewed me Saturdayishly. X. says he had nothing to do with it. Went to X.'s (where Heaven knows there is little inducement to go) and heard the interesting question of the thickness of beef-steaks in different parts of the world discussed at great length. Everyone is very kind there—but, the Lord deliver me from journalists!

"This very long letter has grown bit by bit. Several times I thought it had come to the end, but there being no stamps in the near neighbourhood each time adding a bit.

"Outside my window the balcony is covered with a whirl of fire-red leaves from the Virginia creeper. To-day it is raining and blowing and they are flying hither and thither or gathered in corners, sodden with wet. Now even the horse-chestnut has begun to wither. The chestnuts fall now and then with quite a loud rustle and thud, and the whole house at the garden side is covered with a crimson ruin of creeper and the sunflowers are all leaning down weighted by their heavy seeds."

Few of his letters say so much about himself as this letter of extraordinary interest, which also contains a good deal about other people's work, less interesting to the reader, except inasmuch as it shows the poet's generosity and sympathy.

CHAPTER V

LETTERS: W. B. YEATS

"January 13, 1889.

". . . By the bye, have you seen my letter in the *Nation* last week on Carleton in reply to a review of 'Stories from Carleton,' that brought up his Protestant period against him. At the foot of my letter they protest that they did not say anything against him as a whole but only against the anti-Catholic that was in him for a time. It is amusing to find printed after my letter a note from a Tipperary priest thanking them for their timely protest against this republication of Carleton's stories and wondering that I would edit such a book. He at any rate read them as I did—O these bigots!—fortunately their zeal is not equalled by their knowledge. I daresay I surprised some folk by reminding them of the numberless books full of the most ardent defence of the Catholic priesthood written by Carleton, and by showing how very little there is of his anti-Catholic work and how early it was. I dare say though they are no bigots—people have so long passed on the calumny that unenquiring people might well come to believe that all he wrote was bitterly sectarian.

"Here is a little song written lately—the one thing written this long while bar prose. It is supposed to be sung by a mother to her child:—

'The angels are sending
A smile to your bed,
They weary of tending,
The souls of the dead.

'Of tending the seven—
The planets' old brood:
And God smiles in heaven
To see you so good.

'My darling, I kiss you
With arms round my own,
Ah, how shall I miss you
When heavy and grown.'

The last two lines are suggested by a Gaelic song quoted in Griffin's 'Collegians.'

"I can write no more now. I have just had Russian influenza and, it leaves one curiously weak for a day or two and I can by no means fix my mind further on this letter."

"January 16.

"I did not post enclosed as I wanted to put in a new version of the small song and the influenza came on again at once after my making it or rather influenza plus cold came. I am now much as I was when writing enclosed. Song in new version goes—(I write it over the page on second thoughts—):—

'A Cradle Song.

'The angels are bending
Above your white bed,
They weary of tending
The souls of the dead;

'And God smiles in heaven
To see you so good,
And the old planets seven
Grow sweet with His mood.

'I kiss you and kiss you,
With arms round my own,
Ah how shall I miss you
My darling when grown.'

"Is not this better than the other?

"I write no more—writing this much with trouble."

"January 31, 1889.

"I got the first criticisms of my book* all on the same day. On Tuesday came Dowden's letter, Father Russell's, quoting a capital criticism of Montagu Griffin's, the *Manchester Guardian's* and *Manchester Chronicle's* notices, and also, I forgot to say, the *Irish Monthly* notice enclosed in Father Russell's letter. So far all favourable. *Guardian* finds me rough but praiseworthy, and likes me better than any other writer on Irish Myth except Tennyson in 'Voyage of Maeldune,' but at the same time seems to know nothing of Irish writers on Irish myth, as Aubrey de Vere is taken as typical of the tribe. On the whole I should say *Guardian* does not like me much. *Chronicle* favourable but too short for any purpose. Dowden very favourable, likes 'Oisin' very much the best; wants me to set to work on a poetic drama for Ellen Terry. I will enclose Father Russell's note for sake of Griffin's criticism if I can find it. Miss Gonne (you have heard of her, no doubt) was here yesterday with introduction from the O'Learys; she says she cried over 'Island of Statues' fragment, but altogether favoured the Enchantress and hated Nachina. Did I tell you that William Morris likes the book greatly and intends if he has time, to review me in the *Commonweal*. Such are all criticisms so far. Todhunter's article is not yet out.

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* "The Wanderings of Oisin."

"My ideas of a poem have greatly changed since I wrote the 'Island.' 'Oisin' is an incident or series of incidents; 'The Island of Statues' a region. There is a thicket between three roads, some distance from any of them, in the midst of Howth. I used to spend a great deal of time in that small thicket when at Howth. The other day I turned up a poem in broken metre written long ago about it. That thicket gave me my first thought of what a long poem should be; I thought of it as a region into which one should wander from the cares of life. The characters were to be no more real than the shadows that people the Howth thicket. Their mission was to lessen the solitude without destroying its peace. The other day Edwin Ellis read me an Arcadian play he has written. In it everything is careworn, made sick by weariness. I told him it was the garden of Eden, but the garden when Adam and Eve have been permitted to return to it in their old age. 'Yes,' he said, 'and they have found the serpent there grown old too and regretting their absence and nibbling their initials on a tree.' He is the most enthusiastic reader of my poems and takes greatly to 'Oisin.' I wish you could see some of his own poems; his Arcadian play contains this beautiful line describing the heroine—

'Seven silences like candles round her face,'

meaning she was so calm and stately and awe-inspiring. But on the whole his verses lack emotional weight. Still he will have, I believe, a small niche some day.

"I got—did I tell you?—a bundle of verses for an opinion on them from a stranger the other day. Some lady in Co. Down. I spent a long time trying to say something pleasant about them without saying too much. They were not very good, though sincere and musical. You I suppose often get such letters. It was my first. How this letter rambles on in a rudderless way. In the old letter I mentioned of yours there is a little poem. I forgot, I think, to tell you at the time that it is very pretty. I envy your power of writing stray snatches of verse. I cannot do it at all. With me everything is premeditated for a long time. When I am away in the country and easy in my mind I have much inspiration of the moment—never here. I have written no verse for a long time.

"Our little black cat, Daniel O'Connell, ate some mice that had been poisoned and he died last Sunday."

"3, Blenheim Road,
"February.

"What I want to tell you about is my new poem, a drama founded on the *Countess Cathleen O'Shee*, in Folk Lore book. Did you see the long and naïvely scientific review of Fairy Book in *Athenæum?* (Oscar Wilde said I should have replied, but I was too lazy). . . . This new poem of mine promises to be my most interesting poem and in all ways quite dramatic, I think. I shall try to get it acted by amateurs (in Dublin, if possible) and afterwards try it perhaps on some stage actor or manager.

"I read your poem on the woodcarver in an old 'Hobby Horse,' and think it beautiful.

"I write mainly to persuade you to write to me. Do you know that your letters grow fewer and fewer, or I think they do.

. . . . . .

"You will be surprised to hear what I am at besides the new play—'A Commentary on the Mystical Writings of Blake.' A friend is helping me, or perhaps I should say I am helping him, as he knows Blake much better than I do, or anyone else perhaps. It should draw notice—be a sort of red flag above the waters of oblivion—for there is no clue printed anywhere to the mysterious 'Prophetic Books.' Swinburne and Gilchrist found them unintelligible.

"Poor Pigott! One really got to like him; there was something so frank about his lies. They were so completely matters of business, not of malice. There was something pathetic too in the hopeless way the squalid latter day *Erinnyes* ran him down. The poor domestic-minded swindler!

"Write! You have been silent a long time—your last letter was on the 26th of January.

"Yours always,
"W. B. Yeats."

. . . . . .

"February 6.

"The *Freeman* review of my book must have been done by some person of old-fashioned tastes. He seemed to have suspected me of 'aestheticism.' Peahens do dance—at least they dance throughout the whole of Indian poetry. The reviewer was evidently friendly but disgusted—'Oisin' will rouse much opposition because it has more imaginative energy than any other poem in the book. To many people nothing seems sincere but the commonplace. The *Monthly* speaks of another review of 'Oisin.' I hope Father Russell will have one—'Oisin' needs an interpreter. There are three incompatible things which man is always seeking—infinite feeling, infinite battle, infinite repose—hence the three islands. If I can sell the 200 or so copies that remain of my book in anything like decent time I shall care little about reviewers' likings or dislikings. I would then have made things simple for my second book. Griffin writes me that his father, who knows well the old legend, says my 'Oisin' gave him a better idea of the mingled nobility and savagery of the ancient heroes than MacPherson's 'Ossian.'

"Almost every poem in the book has been liked better than the rest by somebody—a good sign."

. . . . . .

"March 9, 1889.

"You know how to praise! What a good untiring friend you are! I got the article to-day and write at once to thank you. It is a most generous article. By the same post came the *Scots Observer* with a splendid article by Henley headed 'A New Irish Poet.' Strange that the best articles yet should come by the same post. Henley after 'Oisin' praises 'King Goll,' 'Song of the Last Arcadian' and 'Old Fisherman,' and 'Island of Statues.' 'Last Arcadian' is, he says, more subtle than any other poem in book. 'Kanva on God' he also praises. He is most enthusiastic throughout. I have just heard by this post that there is a capital review in *Saturday* of this week, but have not seen it, of course. I will send you *Scots Observer* shortly. What a jumble of letters I sent you yesterday. I was taking the letter to the post when I found in my pocket a letter stamped and all, which I thought had gone to you long ago. I opened the letter I had just written and added the other without having time even to read it. I fear the two letters between them contain too much mere personal news, the fortunes of articles, the book, etc. But then you know I have little more to write about, especially when as at present I am deep in lengthy MSS.—the portcullis is down. I am looking for dramatic thoughts. I do not know what is going on in the house, and what is the good of writing gossip of the people one meets one moment and forgets the next?

"Heyho! I wish I was out of London in order that I might see the world. Here one gets into one's minority among the people who are like one's self—mystical. literary folk, and such like. Down at Sligo one sees the whole world in a day's walk, every man in a class. It is too small there for minorities. All this bloodless philosophical chatter is poor substitute for news, but then I have none. 'You must not go to pear-trees for apples,' as our Allingham said, or me for news. Again a great many thank-yous for your generous article."

. . . . . .

"What have you written lately? What poetry? What prose? I always like details on these matters.

"I must wind up this letter presently and get to work on the 'Countess O'Shee,' that my mind may be full of it when I go for my walk an hour hence. It is a wild, windy night, the sky full of ravelled clouds and patches of greeny blue—the sort of night that stimulates thought, and I must out.

"Do not forget to send me all news of your prose and poetry.

". . . I do not send *Saturday* notice of 'Oisin' as you have seen it, but enclose *Scots Observer* one. 'Atalanta' promises review in May number. No American reviews as yet. I have stuck all yet received into a book which I will let you see when they wind up. Twenty-two thus far. Mostly all praise my dramatic sketches; after 'Oisin' 'Time and Vivien' seems liked.

"I am delighted to hear about the 'Culdee.' How do you treat it? Will you bring in local scenery. I hope you will do that. It would be a fine thing to write a poem that always would be connected with Tallaght in people's minds. All poetry should have a local habitation when at all possible. Some day we shall have to publish another ballad-book containing the best of our national and local songs and ballads. By 'ours' I mean yours and mine. You were not quite at your best in 'Ballads of Young Ireland, 1888,' at least not always at your best. Though York Powell greatly likes your 'Michael Dwyer.' Did I ever tell you that?"

. . . . . .

"Please remember you owe me a letter—I am not going to confirm you in your sins by writing one until I get it. This is merely a note to tell you that I am reading for that book of Irish Tales and that you promised me a story of Miss Mulholland's and one or two others.

"I have a lot of things to say but will say nothing.

Write to me;
Write to me;
Write to me;

till then I am dumb. It is about six weeks since your letter was due."

. . . .

"April 23, 1889.

"Have you any novels of Carleton's beside the short stories? I have them, but am trying to borrow somewhere one or two of his longer tales, such as 'Willy Reily' or 'Valentine M'Clutchy,' or indeed any of them. The *Scots Observer* people have asked me to write an article on him apropos of the 'Red-Haired-Man's Wife,' the posthumous tale of his discovered somewhere and printed the other day by Sealy Bryers and Walker.

"I have been doing rather well lately. I told you about the man who came and asked me to do literary notes for the *Manchester Courier*. They give me very little trouble and are fairly profitable. I got £7 for an article in *Leisure Hour* and have had two in *Scots Observer* and sent off another. The *Scots Observer* pays well—about £1 a column. These matters have made the 'Countess' fare but badly. Fortunately my constitutional indolence brings my thoughts swinging perpetually back to it by their own weight. I am not half-industrious enough to drive my thoughts. They go their own road, and that is to imaginative work. I shall have a day at the 'Countess' to-morrow. To me the dramatic is far the pleasantest poetic form. By the way I have written two sets of verses to illustrations sent me by the Tract Society.

"I have been making amends to myself by doing little else than plant sunflowers and marigolds all the afternoon.

"Last week I dined at Mrs. Lawrence's. That Miss X., who was Senior Wrangler the other year—the papers talked a lot about her—sat next. Do you know it is possible to be a Senior Wrangler and yet have only the most commonplace ideas. What poor delusiveness is all this 'higher education of women.' Men have set up a great mill, called examinations, to destroy the imagination. Why should women go through it? Circumstance does not drive *them*. They come out with no repose, no peacefulness—their minds no longer quiet gardens, full of secluded paths, and umbrage-circled nooks, but loud as chaffering market places. Mrs. Z. is a great trouble mostly. She has been through the mill and has got the noisest mind I know. She is always denying something. To return to Miss X., she is about 23 and is married to a man of 60, he being the only Senior Wrangler obtainable. He is very chatty and pleasant and quite human. He seemed enormously interested in Mrs. C.'s baby. Talked much too about Ireland.

"Lady Wilde spoke the other day of some prose of yours (she said you sent it her I think); she said 'every sentence was so beautifully poised.' She thinks you should write a good deal of prose. I hope rather you are doing plenty of poetry. How goes the 'Rapt Culdee'? Though indeed it was a good thing if your prose stories do well. They help the imagination, I think. You have told me nothing lately about the story you had written. Has it come out? I know I gained greatly from my experiment in novel-writing. The hero turned out a bad character and so I did not try to sell the story anywhere. I am in hopes he may reform.

"There has been trouble at the Society. As a result Madame Blavatsky is in high spirits. The Society is like the 'happy family' that used to be exhibited round Charing Cross Station—a cat in a cage full of canaries. The Russian cat is beginning to purr now and smoothen its fur again. The canary birds are less by three. The faithful will be more obedient than ever.

"Do not be disgusted at those trite verses for the Tract Society. I shall never do any more I think."

. . . . . .

"May 9.

"That you are coming to London is the best news I have heard this long time. I shall work hard at the 'Countess' that it may be finished when you come. The Meynells are not so very far from us, by good luck. An easy tram ride away. You will see Bedford Park at its best. All the trees and flowers in their full dress. There will be quite a number of people to bring you to see. Todhunter and York Powell, who both admire your work, are near at hand.

"Jack and myself begin painting a design on my study ceiling to-day. We have had it long in our minds to do it. We have been putting it off—now we set to work to have it done when you arrive.

"About Carleton, John O'Leary has sent me some novels of his. I have not yet done much on the subject for I am only just home from Oxford, in addition to which I have not been well the first days of this week, but am all right again. Had a pleasant time at Oxford. Dined a good deal with the Fellows, and did not enjoy that much, but found the evenings at York Powell's with an occasional friend of his very pleasant. I found a student there who had bought my book. They have got it at the Oxford Union."

. . . . . .

"2, St. John's Villas, St. John's Road, Oxford,
"August 14, 1889.

"There is a most beautiful country about here. I walked sixteen miles on Sunday—going to the places in Matthew Arnold's poems—the ford in 'The Scholar Gipsey' being the furthest away and most interesting. How very unlike Ireland this whole place is—like a foreign land (as it is). One underſtands—(a long s, I notice, has got in here out of the book I am copying)—English poetry more from seeing a place like this. I only felt at home once—when I came to a steep lane with a stream in the middle. The rest one noticed with a foreign eye, picking out the strange and not as in one's own country, the familiar things for interest, the fault by the way of all poetry about countries not the writer's own. The people, I notice, do not give you 'a fine day' or answer yours as in Ireland. The children seem more civil I think; (perhaps however generations of undergraduates have scared them into good behaviour)."

. . . . . .

"October 6.

"A great many thanks for your pleasant little notice of me in the *Magazine of Poetry*. It is good as possible. There are just one or two little matters you were in error about. It is quite true that I used constantly when a very small child to be at Sandymount Castle, but it was not my birthplace. I was born at a house in Sandymount Avenue. A little house, which my old uncle looked on with scorn and called even on the outside of his letters 'the quarry hole,' because he remembered when he was a young man there being a quarry hole where it was afterwards built. The place that has really influenced my life most is Sligo. There used to be two dogs there—one smooth-haired, one curly-haired—I used to follow them all day long. I knew all their occupations, when they hunted for rats and when they went to the rabbit warren. They taught me to dream maybe. Since then I follow my thoughts as I then followed the two dogs—the smooth and the curly—wherever they lead me.

"Our little black cat caught a mouse the other day. Since then she is not half so amusing—Lolly says she feels the responsibility of life and is always thinking. She has suddenly grown up.

"I have just seen,—Lady Wilde sent it me,—your article on the Cardinal. A very good article it is. Am very glad to hear of 'The Culdee' coming out in Xmas *East and West*. My little 'Fox-hunter' ballad seems liked—Jack with his horse-loving tendency likes it best of my short poems. A friend of Ellis's meditates a picture on the subject to be called ' The march past.' Hounds and horse being led past their dying owner.

" I have met lately an amusing musical and literary family. The Miss K——s. One sings, one writes novels, some of which have been most successful. The novel-maker has just published a clever sentimental book. I had tea with them yesterday and they told me a good story of their childhood. One day they went into the store-room—to see what they could see. There was a box full of apples. They knew it would be very wicked to take one so instead they bit a piece out of each one and then turned the good sides up. Their mother knew which had bitten each apple because one had lost one tooth, one another. They used to live in the same house we lived in at Earl's Court when we came to London two and a half years ago. Mrs. Wheeler was full of tales of them. The novel-maker has described the Earl's Court house in her last book."

. . . . . .

" October 10, 1889.

" My dear Miss Tynan (I wonder if it would matter if I put your Christian name, by the bye).

" Your letter to my father was very interesting and all that about your dog in chief so. With us there is nothing to tell other than that Jack has come home with a number of sketches of Sligo. I have got one framed for my room. He keeps shouting, mostly Sligo nonsense rhymes (he always comes home full of them) such as

' You take the needle and I'll take the thread,
And we'll sow the dog's tail to the Orange man's head.'

" You must be settling down by this, though indeed you seem at home and comfortable at all times (unlike me, the sole of whose foot is uneasy). You must be settling down—writing, and that kind of thing—not minding much this dripping autumn. Do not forget that I am expecting a letter, and do not make it short merely because there is no news in this of mine—I have none but Blake news, for that matter goes on well. The book may be done by January if this Putnam affair does not take all my time.

" I have just—this moment—got a letter from Le Gallienne's publisher asking for an experimental dozen of ' Oisin,' sale or return of course, and promising to advertise me—with Press opinions—in his catalogue.

"Le Gallienne's publisher's reader seems confident that publisher will sell 'Oisin.' I have no faith that way nor have had, I shall sell but not yet. Many things, my own and other folks, have to grow first.

"When you write always tell me what you are writing, especially what poems; the journalism interests me more dimly of course, being good work for many people, but no way, unless on Irish matters, good work for you or me, unless so far as it be really forced on us by crazy circumstances. At least I think this way about it, not with any notion of poet's dignity, of course, but because so much in the way of writing is needed for Irish purposes. You know all this as well as I do however. Much may depend in the future on Ireland now developing writers who know how to formulate in clear expressions the vague feelings, now abroad—to formulate them for Ireland's not for England's use. Well! One could run on endlessly in this kind of way and you who love men and women more than thoughts would always grow indignant."

"3, Blenheim Road, Bedford Park, Chiswick,
"October 23.

"I want you to tell me anything you know about poor Miss O'Leary's death. When did she die and so forth? I know nothing but the vaguest rumours. Last week O'Leary wrote to me from Paris saying 'a horrible calamity has come and the light of my life has gone out.' He said nothing more definite. On Sunday and yesterday I saw him (he came Saturday from Paris). He gave me Miss O'Leary's proof sheets saying that she had wished me to correct them. He is evidently grieving very much. He makes constant indirect allusions to his trouble but says nothing definite. I would not be certain of her death at all only that on Monday I heard by chance that Miss Gonne was in London and rushed off at once and saw her for about five minutes or less. She was just starting for Paris. She knew no more than that Miss O'Leary died at Cork some few days ago. Do you know whether there was any kind of a public funeral? Were there any notices in any papers?

"You will probably see me in Dublin next spring or before. O'Leary asks me to stay with him for a while if I pass through on my way to Sligo.

"Yours always,
"W. B. Yeats.

"I saw your article on William O'Brien; it was copied in Sligo papers—very good in many ways—more about it in next letter."

"3, Blenheim Road, Bedford Park, Chiswick,
"December 4, 1889.

"I send you at last that sketch of you and your surroundings. If you can think of anything further you would like me to say send it back to me with your notes for alteration. I wrote it yesterday, the first clear day I had. I would have done it long ago but thought it would be a work of several days. However my practice over 'Sherman' has made my prose come much more easily. I am now setting to work on an article on Todhunter's book.

"I hope this sketch of you will please you. As your friend wants to use it with something of her own, if I remember rightly, I was afraid to make it longer. Was it Curran or another who lived once at Whitehall? Do not forget to correct it if I have put the name wrong. Indeed make any alterations you like.

"Do you know about the best Irish papers for literary advertisements. Walter Scott wrote to me some time since to ask where they should advertise Folk-lore book. I wrote and asked O'Leary and Miss Kavanagh (she being the only journalist of my acquaintance) but have not heard.

"There is little news to tell—the best is that Lily is working at embroidery with Miss Morris every day. She is to be a kind of assistant of hers. She has for a fellow-worker a Miss Mason, daughter of the celebrated painter of the 'Harvest Moon.' She likes it greatly; they make cushion covers and mantelpiece covers without end. She dines at the Morrises every day. Morris is greatly disturbed by little boys who insist on playing under his study windows. He rushes out every now and then and drives them off. There is a parrot in the house that keeps up a great noise whistling and sneezing and holding conversations with itself. He is used to the parrot and does not mind it. The parrot's favourite is one of the servants. It likes her because she makes so much noise and hops all over the house after her copying every noise she makes.

"This letter is very short but do not be led astray by it; send me a very long one in answer.

"Yours always,
"W. B. Yeats."

. . . . . .

"Did I tell you that we have found a new long poem of Blake's? Rossetti mentioned its name, no more. We are the only people who ever read it. It is two thousand lines long or so, and belongs to three old men and their sister who live away at Red Hill in Surrey. Ellis and myself go from time to time and do a day's copying out at it. The old men are very hospitable and bring out 30 years old port-wine for us, and, when I am copying, the oldest of the old men sits beside me with a penknife in his hand to point my pencil when it blunts. Their house is a great typical bare country house. It is full of Blake matters. The old men and their sister are like 'a family of pew openers' Ellis says. Blake is their church; at the same time they are no little troubled at the thought that maybe he was heretical. I tried to convince them of his orthodoxy and found it hard to get the great mystic into their little thimble.

"Yes, my beard is off! and whether for good I don't know. Some like it, some not. Madame Blavatsky promised me a bad illness in three months through the loss of all the mesmeric force that collects in a beard—one has gone by. When she sees me she professes to wonder at my being still on my legs. It makes a great change. I felt quite bewildered for a time at losing the symbol I knew myself by—I mean changing it so. I still feel somewhat like the sweep in the story whose face was washed in the night so that when he saw himself in the glass in the morning he said they had woke the wrong man.

"Do not leave me so long without a letter next time.

"So R—— is trying to get a professorship in Australia. He will be a loss in many ways. I was always hoping he would drift into things—do something for nationalism, political or literary, though indeed I fear the scholastic brand was too deep in his heart. He is a loss anyway, however. . . .

"Jack is at Portsmouth. He and a friend walked there.

"Oscar Wilde mentioned his hearing from you about *East and West* and asked if it was a paper meant to improve people. I said not, so he will probably write for it.

"There is a tintinabulation of tea-things outside, bringing this to an end, but indeed I have written a good long letter, longer than yours are, worse luck.

"I hear that a painter Montefiore is making the subject of my *East and West* poem the subject of his Academy picture. He says it is the best subject he ever had.

"W. B. Y."

. . . . . .

"March, 1890.

"I have been a long time without writing I fear. This Putnam book and some Blake copying has kept my thoughts busy and away from letter-writing. When I let so long go by, do be forgiving and write as I do when you are silent. But ah, you are too law-abiding and keep to the letter of the law and wait my answer.

"My father is painting a large portrait of me for the Academy and using all my available time for sittings. He constantly reminds himself to do the sketch of me you asked for but finds himself—Academy-time drawing near—too anxious, I imagine to work except on the portrait.

"As for myself I am deep in Putnam's job, finishing the last two or three days' work. Then comes an article on Nettleship's designs for the *Art Review*—great designs never published before. And later on an article on Blake and his anti-materialist art for somewhere, describing experiments lately made by me, Ellis, Mrs. Besant, etc., in clairvoyance, I being the mesmerist; and some experiments too of still stranger nature. Probably if I decide to publish these things I shall get called all sorts of names—impostor, liar, and the rest, for in this way does official science carry on its trade. But you do not care for magic and its fortunes, and yet your Church's enemy is also materialism. To prove the action of man's will, man's soul, outside his body would bring down the whole thing—crash—at least for all who believed one—but then who would believe? Maybe my witnesses are more prudent than I and will bid me remain silent.

"What are you writing? I was greatly pleased to hear of your doing a life of someone; your prose is often so very good that it may be a quite notable book. Lady Wilde praised your prose style again to me yesterday. Have you heard Oscar's last good thing. He says that Sharp's motto should be *Acutis decensus averni* (sharp is the descent into Hell). The phrase as you know begins in the orthodox way *Facilis* (easy). By the by, have you gone on at all with your Greek?"

"March 4.

"The Putnam book goes off, for certain to-morrow, thank goodness. The general introduction still remains however. . . . Last time I wrote I sent you some little verses and you never said anything about them. Did you like them?

"Yours always,
"W. B. YEATS."

. . . . . .

"Mr. O'Leary showed me a letter in which you speak of publishing a new book next year and of selecting the contents when I am with you. How glad I shall be to see you and go through the poems with you! I hope to get away in six weeks or so but am now a prisoner with perpetual Blake—Blake—Blake. Ellis I hear made a very brilliant speech on the subject at the 'Odd Volume' dinner last Friday. Quaritch, our publisher, brought him down and fired him off as it were. It was intended as an advertisement I suppose. He exhibited a huge chart of mine representing Blake's symbolic scheme in a kind of genealogical tree.

"O'Leary has been staying with us for a few days. He left yesterday however. How I envy him going over to Ireland! London is always horrible to me. The fact that I can study some things I like here better than elsewhere is the only redeeming fact. The mere presence of more cultivated people too is a gain of course, but nothing in the world can make amends for the loss of green field and mountain slope, and for the tranquil hours of one's own country side. When one gets tired and so into bad spirits it seems an especial misfortune to live here—it is like having so many years blotted out of life.

"Write soon. You see I have not waited for your letter and so have especial claim on you in the matter of a speedy reply. When you write always tell me about yourself and what you are doing or thinking about. It is not so much news I want as to feel your personality through the ink and paper. Think of me in this matter as most exacting—you cannot tell me enough about yourself.

"P.S.—When I get over to Ireland I also will try to get a new book of poetry into shape. That is to say I will finish up the play I showed you and write some more ballads and so forth. Shall also have to do then, or a little later, this Unwin Essay on 'Ireland in the Last Century' for the Book of Adventures."

"July 1, 1890.

"I have been so long in writing because I hoped to send you some notes or perhaps an abstract of the little 'Mystery Play' on the Adoration of the Magi that I propose. I found however that I could not get on without knowing the Catholic tradition on the subject and so far I have not had time to look it up in some dictionary of legend at the Museum.

"I am working at Blake and such things. The *Art Review* has come to an end and so unhappily my article on Nettleship's designs is useless. I shall get the editing of a book of reprints of lives of one or two such men as Fighting Fitzgerald I think. These books do not really pay as well as articles, but they help one to make up subjects that are afterwards of great use. I shall be writing some Blake articles at once now. We—Ellis and myself—intend posting one or two to Scribner's.

"I have seen Miss Imogen Guiney several times. She was out here one Sunday. We all like her greatly. Someone here said she is just like one of the heroines in Howell's novels. I have gone to see her once or twice when going in to the Museum, but have not seen her just lately, for I have been doubly a prisoner through some work on Irish Novelists for Putnam and a cough now taking its departure. . . ."

"July 5.

"I have been in the Museum much lately reading up the duellists and outlaws for this Unwin book—going through contemporary and chap-book records. Whether the book comes off or no, they will serve me for articles at any rate.

"Are you well on with the 'Life of the Nun' you are doing? I hope they give you a fairly free hand in the matter and allow you to make her human, not too much of the white light of piety. Remember it is the stains of earth-colour that make man differ from man and give interest to biography."

"July 15.

"When I finished the above I had no stamp and then forgot it.

"The little poem you so much liked was in the *Scots Observer* a couple of weeks ago. York Powell liked it greatly. I shall get to Ireland some time this year but when I do not know. The book of duellists and the Blake must first be finished."

"September, Sunday.

"My dear Katey,—I have again delayed long in answering your letter. Blake and other matters have kept me busy and I put off writing from day to day. But do not think it is any forgetfulness brought on, as you put it, by 'frivolous London life.' London life, for one thing, has taken its 'frivolity' to Brighton and elsewhere, this time of year, and all times I see but little of it. Nor if I did could it put you or Ireland or aught else much out of thought, for I set small store by it and would gladly never look upon it again. I will if any chance makes it possible find my way to Dublin before the year's end and avail myself of your invitation (it ought to have had quicker response from me), but some time now I am a prisoner. Blake keeps me to my desk. Quaritch has finally agreed to publish the book, giving us by way of payment 13 large paper copies each—they will be worth at the smallest £3 apiece, I suppose. We are to have reproductions of all the illustrations to the prophetic books—about 160 drawings in all—and charts and maps as many as we need. There will be two volumes, one containing the mystical poems—one of these, 'Vala,' a poem of great length and beauty, never having been printed or even read before

The other volume will contain our commentary. The whole book will be in printer's hands before winter, I hope, and will be as far as illustrations and general size and get up are concerned the most important thing done as yet upon Blake. Our part will I believe give to the world a great religious visionary who has been hidden.

"I am also editing, or trying to edit, a book of Irish Adventures for Unwin. Whether it will please I do not know. I am to give in it 'A Vivid View of Irish Life in the Eighteenth Century.' I am quite new to historical writing as well as up to my ears in Blakean Mysticism with scarcely a moment for anything else. If all goes well I shall have this twenty pounds and another from Putnam for the book of Irish Novelists, some time this winter, and so may manage to get something out of it to take me to Ireland and on to Sligo for a while. I wish very much to finish somewhere in peace verse enough for another book and perhaps start a romance. I think now I have said all I need say of my own matters. I hope yours go on well—the 'Nun' and the rest. Always tell me of any poems you are doing. Our work after all is our true soul, and to know how that goes is the great thing.

"Please forgive me if I write no more now. I am tired for some reason or other and therefore dispirited and have the wish to keep such ever away from what I write, and so end this. Do not revenge my double delay by keeping me long out of an answer to this, but write within a week or so.

"Yours always,
"W. B. YEATS."

"May.

"If I was over in Ireland I would ask you to collaborate with me on that little Miracle Play I suggested to you on the Adoration of the Magi. I have written so much in dramatic form that I could perhaps help by working a little prose sketch in dialogue to be turned into verse by you. Would collaboration make it hard for you to work or easy?

"You will like Blake's system of thought. It is profoundly Christian—though wrapped up in a queer dress—and certainly amazingly poetical. It has done my own mind a great deal of good in liberating me from formulas and theories of several kinds. You will fimd it a difficult book, this Blake interpretation, but one that will open up for you as it has for me new kinds of poetic feeling and thought."

He gave me credit for too much. I should never have attempted the Blake book.

"Ballykilbeg, Co. Down,
"July 24, 1891.

"I arrived here yesterday and spent the evening letting up fire balloons and hunting them across country and am to-day writing the notice of Miss O'Leary for Miles. I asked Charles Johnston did he remember a boy at Harcourt St. called Hinkson. He said he did and that he was a very nice fellow and has 'the true instinct of the scholar.' It is about the first instance in which I have heard him praise any Harcourt St. boy.

"I saw the *National Press* review of the 'Nun' in the train yesterday—most unjust. I suspect T. of being the author by the style. It touches a defect but only a superficial one, and makes it appear typical of the whole. It will stir up your friends however. The poems he quotes with disapproval seemed to me particularly good. The *National Press* was probably glad enough to have an article attacking you in revenge for your father's and your own Parnellism. The papers on your own side will be made all the more favourable by this attack."

"December 2, 1891.

"The books I left with Dr. Sigerson for you were Hyde's 'Beside the Fire,' the 'Kilkenny Journal' and one or two more whose names I do not remember. Of course I had nothing to do with the Manzoni and Bret Harte things. Did I tell you how fine I think the poems in your new book are? They are quite your best work. The 'Apologia' is exquisite. Rolleston likes it best of all your work. There is a man here—a well-known journalist, Fox-Bourne by name—who has been wholly captivated by your 'Nun.' I am very glad to hear that the book has sold so well. My own 'Sherman' is doing well—I got my first £10 for it last Saturday and shall I hear get about £30 at any rate. Unwin is to bring out 'The Countess Kathleen.' The Blake too is going ahead. But I am not very well these days and so take little joy out of this glimmering of ampler life and success. Never did the mountain of deeds seem so steep and my feet so poor at climbing. I have one of my fits of depression. It will go by after a week or two. I imagine I have already written to you in the past from the deeps of more than one, but as life goes on they blacken. One knows at the worst of them however that the sun and the wind will together make the path merry again. I say all this to explain why I have not written before. I keep my black moods out of my letters by keeping my letters out of my black moods. I write now because I have your questions about the books to answer.

"'The Book of the Rhymers' Club' has been taken by

Elkin Mathews and will appear about Xmas. It is a very fine work and will give you material for an article or two.

"Henley has asked me for things like Dhoya for the *National Observer* and writes praises of 'John Sherman.' When you review it you might perhaps, if you think it is so, say that Sherman is an Irish type. I have an ambition to be taken as an Irish novelist, not as an English, or cosmopolitan one, choosing Ireland as a background. I studied my characters in Ireland and described a typical Irish feeling in Sherman's devotion to Ballagh. A West of Ireland feeling, I might almost say like that of Allingham for Ballyshannon. It is West rather than National. Sherman belonged like Allingham to the small gentry who, in the West, at any rate, love their native places without perhaps loving Ireland. They do not travel and are shut off from England by the whole breadth of Ireland, with the result that they are forced to make their native town their world. I remember when we were children how intense our devotion was to all things in Sligo and I still see in my mother the old feeling. I claim for this and other reasons that Sherman is as much an Irish novel as anything by Banim or Griffin. Lady Wilde has written me an absurd and enthusiastic letter about it. She is queer enough to prefer it to my poems. The reviews are nearly all good so far."

"December, 1891.

"I have sent a long review of your book to the *Evening Herald*. I sent it on Monday and am very sorry I was not able to send it before. I have been rather unwell this last fortnight and quite without the initiative needed for a start at anything but my daily round of Blake chapters. The printer has about 170 pages in his hands now and the rest will follow as fast as he can print it. All Xmas week I have been wretchedly headachy and that kind of thing, and hope my headache has not got into the review. It is enthusiastic at any rate. . . .

"I am busy getting up a London Irish Literary Society—to be a branch ultimately of Young Ireland League—we are asking Gavan Duffy to be President and are hoping to get Stopford Brooke for one of the vice-presidents, and Rolleston promises to be another. I have put your book down to be got for the library. I want you to review Dr. Todhunter's 'Banshee' for the *Evening Herald*. . . . The 'Rhymers' Book' is in proof, so you will soon be able to say a good word for us there, I hope. Ernest Rhys is in Dublin. Do you know him? I am writing to give him a note of introduction to you. His address is c/o Miss Little, 6, Lower Fitzwilliam St., Dublin. He and his wife are both over. Did I tell you that my 'Countess Kathleen' comes out in April and that the book of Fairy Tales I edited for Unwin is to appear soon—what a bookish letter this is! But then the four walls of my study are my world just now. Do you see the *National Observer?* If you do, please tell me what you thought of my 'Epitaph' and what you think when you see it, of my next poem 'Rosa Mundi.' But I must wind up this now, for when one is unwell there in only ink in one's veins and ink when one expects human nature is deadly dull and I must bore you with no more of it.

"Yours always,
"W. B. Yeats."

. . . . . .

"First to answer your questions about the collection of 'Irish Love Songs' of which by the by, I heard from Unwin's reader with great satisfaction, for no one could do it so well as you. You should, I think, include a fair number from Davis. He is very Irish, and I find he grows upon me, partly because of his great sincerity. His 'Plea for Love' is I think the best of all. You might also use 'The Marriage,' 'Love's Longings,' 'The Boatman of Kinsale' and 'Maire Bhan a stor.' You should I think get Sigerson or someone of that kind to give you phonetic equivalents; the Gaelic spelling he adopts is his own. 'Eogan' for instance should be written as it is pronounced 'Owen.' Do not forget to include 'Kathleen O'More,' a marvellous lyric attributed to Reynolds. I think that 'The Girl with the Fine Flowing Hair' in Walshe's 'Irish Songs' is good too. There was a little thing by Hyde in our ballad book, 'Have you been on the Mountains and seen there my Love,' which might go in. You might perhaps give from 'Oisin,' 'To an Isle in the Water' and an 'Old song re-sung,' for they are more obviously Irish than my recent attempts at love-poetry of which I enclose one or two things. I would have been of much greater help to you a while ago, but I have not been reading the Irish ballads very recently and so cannot advise you so well. By the by, would not 'The Fairy Song' in the 'Rhymers' Book' do for your purpose? It is extremely Irish and has been greatly liked. It is a love poem of a kind. You will be able to choose at any rate what you want of mine from 'Oisin,' the 'R. Book' and the MS. I send.

"But enough of this matter. Blake is getting through the press—about two-thirds, and that the most troublesome part, is gone to press and most of it is already in proof. I am also correcting 'The Countess Kathleen' for the press and getting ready a quantity of lyrics and ballads to go with it. It will be infinitely my best book. I have had rather a bad autumn with poor health and poorer spirits or I had made it better than it is. Health and spirits are I suppose mixed up in some queer way—not quite as the materialists say, but in some fashion. I shall be back in Dublin again very soon now. I am always more at home in Dublin than any other where. . . .

"The following lyrics may perhaps help you to select something for your book. The first was written some months ago, the second the other day.

'When You are Old.

'When you are old and grey and full of sleep
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once and of their shadows deep.

'How many loved your moments of glad grace
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

'And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sad, "from us fled Love;
He paced upon the mountains far above
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars."'

'When You are Sad.

'When you are sad
The mother of the stars weeps too,
And all her starlight is with sorrow mad
And tears of fire fall gently in the dew.

'When you are sad
The mother of the wind mourns too,
And her old wind that no mirth ever had
Wanders and wails before my heart most true.

'When you are sad
The mother of the wave sighs too,
And her dim wave bids man be no more glad,
And then the whole world's trouble weeps with you.'

"I don't know whether these poems are not too literary for your purpose. A book such as you are doing should be Irish before all else. People will go to English poetry for 'literary poetry' but will look to a book like your collection for a new flavour as of fresh-turned mould. Davis, Ferguson, Allingham, Mangan, and Moore should be your mainstay, and every poem that shows English influence in any marked way should be rejected. No poetry has a right to live merely because it is good. It must be *the best of its kind.* The best Irish poets are this, and every writer of imagination who is true to hinself absolutely, may be so. I forgot to say in my letter that I would if I were you include Lover's ' Whistling Thief ' and Walsh's ' Mo Craobhin Cno ' and ' Mairgread nè Chealleadh ' (quite love poems enough), also ' A Love Ballad ' by Mangan (it is in Gill's third collection and is from the Irish).

" I like your L—— man pretty well and my sisters like him very much. He has a will, philosophy, and an unelastic though clever mind, like E. whom you met here. He seems full of projects and has the advantage of being the first Irishman I have met who *has* a philosophy to be detested. I have done my duty by him and introduced him to some literary folk he wanted to meet, and shall try and see more of him, but find I judge people to a great extent by their attitude on certain great questions, and that he is so far as I now see committed, though less hopelessly than his prototype E., to the side which is not mine. I shall however know when his book on the philosophy of criticism comes out.

. . . . . .

" I send you the Henley notes for your article. I forgot to mention that Henley is a big burly man with a beard and a restless way of sitting and moving, somewhat like W. Morris in this. One of his good points is his sympathy with young writers.

. . . . . .

" Do not think that you are out of my thoughts because I do not write. I am one of those unhappy people for whom between Thought and Deed lies ever the terrible gulf of dreams. I sit down to write and go off into a brown study instead, at least if circumstances offer me the slightest excuse. My excuse these times is that Blake always hangs in the balance ; it always seems possible that a month, say, might finish him. When I begin to write to you, and I have started a letter several times, I stop and say ' What shall I say about times and dates,' and thereon I am down in the gulf and the letter is put off for more exact information.

" Yesterday I got a paper with Miss Kavanagh's death announced in it. It was a great shock to us all. . . . I had no expectation that we would lose her so soon. Only the other day I re-read her ' St. Michan's Churchyard ' and thought how charming it was. Everything she did was so like herself. It had the same quiet and gentle sincerity. It was so entirely untouched by the restless ambition that makes writers untrue to themselves. She was essentially it seems to me what people mean by the phrase 'A beautiful soul.' To you and me and all of us she is a loss. Some of the pleasure of writing is gone in that we cannot send her any more anything that we write. How our old circle is broken up! First Miss O'Leary—and then Miss Kavanagh. Her death is in itself much sadder than Miss O'Leary's. Miss O'Leary had had a full and not short life, while Miss Kavanagh dies with all her plans and projects uncompleted and her promise unfulfilled. I feel sure that we take up our half-done labours in other lives and carry them to conclusion. If it were not so the best of lives were not worth living, and the universe would have no order and purpose. I think you have some such thought in one of your poems. . . .

"If 'Sherman' gets published I shall be greatly pleased. There is more of myself in it than in anything I have done. I don't imagine it will please many people, but some few it may please with some kind of permanent pleasure. I have no desire to gain that kind of passing regard a book wins from the many. To please the folk of few books is one's grand aim."

The letter-writer reminds me that this letter belongs to February, 1891. The last letter I find tells of collapse from overwork: the doctor has bidden him live "more deliberately and leisurely." He is still hard at work at Blake and still postponing the holiday which he so much needed.

There are other letters, but hardly so entirely an unburdening of the inner self as of old. Parnellism and other distractions had taken possession of me. I was no longer sitting by the warm fire in my pretty room reading the poet's long letters and answering them, I've no doubt, at length. All that quiet life had been broken up.

This is the youth of the poet, some years of which were mine as much as anyone's; and that they were so is one of the proudest and happiest things of my life.

"I keep your golden hour and will restore it,
If ever in time to come you would explore it,
Your old self whose thoughts went like last year's pansies.
Look unto me,—no mirror keeps its glances
In my unfailing praises now I store it."

The arrangement of the letters is, as the poet points out, faulty. I prefer to leave them so, so that I may keep his corrections. Many and many a time we bent together over a poem, his or mine; and that I think a fortunate memory and worth recording. To have his corrections brings me back the old happy collaboration in the home of my girlhood, with all its fragrant memories.

CHAPTER VI

LADY ABERDEEN AND DONEGAL

My diary for the year 1893 begins with a page of good resolutions. It was a very small page, so the resolutions had to be "potted" so to speak. They were:—

> To strive for the good of my own soul and another's.
> To work hard.
> To deny myself unnecessary outlay.
> Not to *talk*.

I cannot tell what the stroke under the "talk" meant. Had I been indiscreet? I don't know that I kept that resolution. Perhaps the well-kept resolution to work hard contained within itself the other, for I have certainly had little time for talk, in the sense of gossip, in a very busy life.

My old life was by this time coming to an end and the new life in view. I had a prodigiously industrious winter and spring, 1892—93, writing all manner of things, increasing my already large correspondence, for ever striking out in new directions, writing in new places, making new friends. I was writing for the *Speaker*, the *National Observer*, the *British Weekly*, *Good Words*, the *Magazine of Art*, *Atalanta*, the *Woman's World* (of which Oscar Wilde was editor), *Sylvia's Journal*, under the editorship of Graham Tomson (later Mrs. Marriott Watson), besides my American, Catholic, and Irish papers and magazines.

On a day in February, 1893, I record that I met Jane

Barlow at an afternoon party at Miss Purser's. Miss Purser is the distinguished artist, sister of Louis Claude Purser, co-editor with Robert Yelverton Tyrrell of the "Correspondence of Cicero." I mention in my diary that I found Miss Barlow very shy and difficult to talk to. I had been one of the first to discover her "Bogland Studies" and had written a long review of it in *United Ireland*, in the course of which I conjectured that the prim little "J. Barlow" on the title page was a *nom de plume*. We were all greatly delighted with Miss Barlow's beautiful Irish work. She was so shy that she crept under her mother's wing that afternoon and could scarcely be prevailed upon to speak to anyone.

I was nothing if not enterprising, for my diary records a visit to Miss Barlow a little later; and that was the beginning of a warm friendship and a close correspondence extending over some twenty years.

There was a day towards the end of February when I went to have an interview with Lady Aberdeen at the Sandymount Convent of the Sisters of Charity, Dublin. Lord Aberdeen was then Governor-General of Canada, but Lady Aberdeen never lost touch with the Irish Industries Associations which she had founded and done so much to foster; and far away as Canada was, she came at intervals to Ireland on its affairs.

We had this rather humorous adventure. When I say "we" I include Dora Sigerson (Mrs. Shorter), who accompanied me to that interview. I had come to discuss with Lady Aberdeen the details of a tour of Donegal I was to make in order to write up the industries for the Chicago Exhibition of that year.

I was accustomed to be *persona grata* with nuns and priests in those days, though perhaps less with the priests since the Parnellite days. But I was always writing up the nuns and their works, and I usually received a most hospitable reception when I visited a convent.

The day was spilling wet. We were a little early or Lady Aberdeen was a little late. The *Irish Daily Independent*, one of those days, wrote of a Royal visitor: "If Punctuality is the Courtesy of Princes then was the Prince most truly courteous yesterday, for he arrived half an hour before his time." Well, that is a courtesy the dearest of ladies did not emulate, has not emulated.

I can see myself and my companion standing on the draggled steps before the wide handsome hall-door, the pitiless rain beating on us and on those who waited with us, who were elderly and old ladies of the shabby-genteel variety, poverty and eccentricity written all over them. There was a greater number than usual of the "cracked" old-lady class in Dublin of that day, doubtless many of them victims of the Land League which had swept away the provision for them which in its day had been thought most solid of all. They were melancholy poor old dears —and they seemed more mildewed by reason of the roseate gleam which lay just then ahead of me on my always-happy road of life.

A harassed little nun opened the door and we fled out of the rain into the spacious hall. Her expression said: "What! More of you! And how many more, pray?"

I mentioned that I had come to see Lady Aberdeen, but omitted to say that I had come by appointment.

"Well, go in there and wait," she said, with a flout of her veil as though she added: "Just like your impudence, too!"

We followed the crow-like troop of old ladies into a large room, of which I retain a vivid impression. The walls were white-washed—it was a sort of waiting-room. It had the painful cleanliness of such convent rooms, but it had not the adornment of the sacred picture or two you generally find. A table in the middle of the floor held writing-materials, obviously never used by anyone. A row of solid, horsehair-seated chairs stood stark against the wall. There was a bookcase, the contents of which were hidden by green curtains inside the glass. Hideous wire-blinds covered the lower part of the windows. On the wall—the sole adornment—was a card bearing the inscription " Habits for the Dead may be Procured Here." This furnishing, plus the rain and the wind and the old ladies long done with life—just old leaves clinging to the tree which the next storm will shake down—made a most depressing interior.

We were standing rather disconsolately looking over the wire-blinds, when the little nun appeared, ushering in another batch of melancholy sightseers. We were as silent as when at the Vatican you wait in one of the porphyry-lined rooms, with other black spectres, upon the stages that bring you nearer your audience. The little nun looked at us and despised us as wasters of time and gapers at a show.

" Now don't you be sticking your noses against the glass like that," she said, addressing us. " It would be a nice thing for the Convent if the Countess when she arrived was to see a row of noses pressed against the pane. She'd think the Irish were a very unmannerly people. Hadn't you better all go into the chapel and say your prayers and be doing something for the good of your souls ? She may not be here for an hour yet."

She drove us all into the chapel and shut us in there, bidding us wait till she called us. Dora Sigerson was very angry at this treatment. I was amused. I do not know why the little nun should have lumped us with the old ladies. I do not think we looked like them. Indeed I am sure we did not. An official at Athlone Station the other day tried to lead us in the wrong direction. "Third class the other end of the train," said he. "Oh, please," said I, "do we look so very third-class ?"

We said our prayers, and, disregarding the nun's instructions, returned to our cheerful waiting-room, not daring to look out of window any longer, even to escape that placard on the wall, the grim *memento mori* amid my joy of life. Presently there was a stir and bustle of arrival and reception. In came the little nun full of abject apologies, and we were transferred to a room, warm and bright, where an excellent tea was being dispensed, and the nuns were gathered about the Viceregal party—Lady Aberdeen was a visitor at the Viceregal Lodge and was accompanied by Lady Fitzgerald, who, with her sister, the Hon. Mrs. Henniker, acted as hostesses for their brother Lord Houghton (Lord Crewe), the Viceroy of those days.

I suppose Lady Aberdeen *was* late. Well—

> "If to her share some female errors fall,
> Look in her face and you forget them all."

My memory of her is that she was a big, soft young woman, with a boyish frankness and gaiety, added to the beautiful smile and voice so dear to her friends. She was deliciously friendly ; such a warm, soft, large personality, like a rose. Her tall, shy young daughter was with her. She turned and took my hand in hers.

Much water was to run under the bridges before the time came when her friendship was to irradiate my life, but I can remember how she wrapt me in warm kindness, how I sat beside her during the performance of the nuns' pupils, how the charm of her personality delighted me.

Just at the end there was a whispered colloquy with someone of the many who have been devoted to her. Lady Aberdeen loved an outside car, and in those premotor days the outside and its steed were at the height of their glory. There was an outside car waiting—the best to be had in Dublin, and the fastest horse. I can see her face now, as she whispered her apologies—the changing, smiling, expressive face. She was obliged to return in state with Lady Fitzgerald. So the outside car had to be foregone. She was irresistible in those days, full of energy, of hope and faith—yes, and of charity, with a courage that found nothing impossible; and happily every word of that description applies to the time more than twenty-two years later when these words are written.

A few weeks later Dora Sigerson and I started for Donegal. We began at Ballyshannon of William Allingham, went right up the Western sea-board, round the North, looking to Tory Island, and back by Letterkenny to Ballyshannon and so home again. It was necessarily somewhat of a scamper, as I had urgent personal business awaiting my return. We did it all in some ten days and had a very brisk, blowy time. Those were the days when Mr. Balfour's light railways were only beginning to be laid. The sole way of getting about Donegal was by outside car. We started quite spick and span. By the time we came back we were blowsed and disreputable out of all recognition; indeed, I don't think anyone would have wanted to recognise us. The old mother of the rising Dublin barrister who kindly entertained us on our way northwards, with some misgivings as to whether we were designing minxes, would have been satisfied if she had seen us on our return journey; we could have attracted no one.

However, this is anticipating. Our run from one end of Donegal to the other and back again is marked in my memory with so many white stones for the hospitable priests, who took possession of us, fed us, entertained us, showed us the beauties of the country, and made us happy. We slept and breakfasted at the hotels. The priests did the rest.

If I were writing a dedication in the manner of Stevenson's to his doctors—I forget what book it was he so dedicated—of this chapter to the kind priests of Donegal I should name Father McNulty, who, at Ballyshannon, took us to see Allingham's "Abbey Assaroe," and other sights; Monsignor McFadden at Donegal, who devoted a day to our service; Father McLoone at Kilcar; Father McAteer at Glencolumbkille; and, finally, the famous Father McFadden of Gweedore.

Father McLoone drove us to see the famous Caves of Muckross and other beautiful places. It was a Friday, and we lunched with him on fish in a room with an earthen floor, yet exquisitely clean and dainty. His table appointments were excellent, and he had some beautiful china, given him by his mother. These things against the humility of the cottage in which he lived were delightful. I remember his "surely" when we asked for anything—there was a whole world of kindness in that Western "surely"—and his chuckles when he asked us to assist him in playing a roguish trick on the donor of the china.

Father McAteer at Glencolumbkille seized on us like a man who is hungry. He was hungry—for human speech and touch. He was a tall, lean, dark young man, who came to meet us with his collie at his heels. His nearest neighbour for any kind of social intercourse was the next-door priest, five Irish miles away. I do not think priests used bicycles in those days, and of course motors had not yet been dreamt of except by Mother Shipton. The Glen was Irish-speaking. He lamented it because it cut the people off from the world. By the greatest of good luck he was able to secure a bit of mutton for our lunch. Fish would have been a greater novelty to us, and there was abundant fish in the Glen. We were waited on at lunch by a barefoot girl. I don't remember about the quality of the mutton, but the entertainment was excellent. I can still remember as we drove away on the car looking back at the tall young figure of the priest, where he stood and gazed after us, shading his eyes with his hand, his dog at his heels, lean as Don Quixote and as mournful. He told us he had been one of a large family —in Dublin, I think.

Oddly enough, the eyes of those lonely priests were turned rather to London than to Dublin. One confessed to me his dream of ministering in the diocese of Southwark, where there would be some hard work to do. "I don't suppose there's a mortal sin in this parish from year's end to year's end," he said.

Over all the years I remember that Father McAteer talked of a recent scene in the House of Commons, in which honourable members had used their fists to each other, with a pained concern for the dignity of the Mother of Parliaments. For some years I used to send him the *Sunday Sun* or the *Weekly Sun*, for which he had a great admiration. It brought him a whiff of London.

Before going on to Father McFadden and Gweedore I may remark that the black stones of the journey were represented by the exorbitant car-drivers. At that time you paid in the hotel bill for your car, which represented perhaps a pound a day. But then you had not settled with your driver. There was an institution called "whip-money," which, from my knowledge of it, I wonder did not deter anyone, however intrepid, from visiting Donegal. I was quite unacquainted with the custom and did not in the least know what to offer. Half-a-crown turned your genial and informing driver into a grinning maniac. Five shillings was nearly as bad. Seven-and-six he might accept with sullen anger, afterwards telling the hotel, or the country-town street about you under your window, where you could hear it. I don't know at what point the honorarium would have given satisfaction, since I never reached it, although I went up and up in nervous abhorrence of a scene. What a blessing Mr. Balfour's light railways were, to be sure!

Two very rosy or very golden stones must be for the kind woman at Ballyshannon who came out of her cottage to show us the way and looked at us as though we were the sun in her skies, long-waited-for. After she had put us on our way, irradiating us with her smile, she kept calling softly, " It won't be good-bye. You'll be comin' back again soon to Donegal ! " Then there was Willie, who drove us from Donegal to Killybegs, in a long wagonette, on a pouring wet day. The wagonette was full of women and parcels—it was a sort of post-car, I suppose. Willie, who had a golden head rippled over with curls, was all things to all women. Who remembered the rain for Willie's jests and laughter ? He was apparently the shopper for every cottage we passed, since he was always clambering down to deliver a parcel or clambering up again, having delivered it. His tender concern for his passengers, his cheerfulness, his beautiful manners, were soothing after the exactions of " whip-money." Ten days later when we came back, disreputable, desiring only to avoid the gaze of our fellow-creatures, Willie met us outside a railway station—was it Donegal ? We were ashamed to meet even Willie's eye, battered as we were by the wind and the rain. But we had to meet it. Willie was so delighted to see us that we almost regained our self-respect. One would think that the Millenium had come to Donegal to see Willie's face.

I must not leave this part of the journey behind without referring to the lady whom we called on at ten o' night on our arrival at Donegal. She did her part of cicerone thoroughly. Ten o' night and full moon, and we must see Donegal Abbey by moonlight, or be for ever failures. She simply would not listen to our protestations that we were tired, that we did not like ruins, that we wanted to go to bed. She seized us as in a whirlwind, rushed us out of the town, along a lonely country road, down a boreen between high hedges. After a while, through the breathless hurry, I became conscious of strange shapes which seemed to lean and peer above the hedges. "What are those stones?" I asked. "Gravestones. The graveyard is all about us." At this time I was very nervous. The consciousness of being in a great graveyard at dead o' night was a most terrifying thing to me; but our guide whirled us along. At last we came to the Abbey, its gable and arches standing up fair in the moonlight overlooking the beautiful Donegal Bay. Before reaching the point at which we might stand and survey the still beauty of the scene I had fallen over innumerable gravestones, tumbled into many pits and been dug out again, walked into tall slabs that hid themselves in the shadow. I fear I was not thinking of the beauty of Donegal Abbey by moonlight as I stood on the slab of a grave following the pointing finger of our inexorable guide.

We were not allowed to scamp our seeing. We had to listen to the history of the place and the notables buried all around us, while the Abbey was full of mysterious rustlings and stirrings amid the acres of graves. I was only restrained from flight by the thought of the way of graves I should have to return alone. At last she gave the order of release. "There are some steps down here to the Quay. They are rather slippery and broken and the Quay is littered with all manner of things over which you may fall and be hurt. Still, it is much shorter than the other way."

With what rashness I hurled myself down those slippery and broken steps! How blessed it was to bruise one's shins over coils of rope and nets and sails and all the débris of the Quay. We said good-night to the lady at her own hall-door. It was so good to be back among the living. We thanked her effusively. "It is nothing," she said; "I am very glad you enjoyed yourselves."

Of course I did not forget that I was on business bent. We saw much lace-making, sprigging, weaving, and all the other industries. At Killybegs of the wonderful Bay, where half our Fleet might ride at anchor, we were received with effusion by the principal merchant of the Donegal tweeds. He showed us all he had to show. We were at once mystified and pleased to find that our fame had travelled before us—not altogether surprised, though properly humble about it.

At the end the little man said: "Ye have th' advantage o' me, my fine young wumman!" He had mistaken us for purchasers and was impatient at our delay in coming to the point.

Dora Sigerson made at that time a highly-humorous sketch-book of our adventures, which is still in my possession.

After all, the best of the adventure was yet to be in Gweedore and Father McFadden, but that, I think, deserves a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER VII

LAST DAYS IN IRELAND

I HAVE been under the impression for many years that we spent at least three days at Gweedore. That must be because our experiences were so many and so varied. My diary tells me unmistakably that we arrived at Gweedore one day and left the next. I am still disinclined to believe it—but there it is in black and white.

Father McFadden was the subject of a good deal of controversy in those days. To one side of Irish life he represented everything there was of the truculent and dangerous priest. To the other he was, with more justice, the kind, if despotic, father of his people. I cannot remember that he had taken much part in the Parnell controversy. My impression is that he had not. He was probably too busy with his people to bother about politics. But he belonged to a type of priest, now almost extinct, which was certainly despotic, but always for the good of the people. Such a one was Father Tom Doyle of Ramsgrange, co. Wexford, who managed every detail of his people's lives from the cradle to the grave. We used to call him Father Ram of Tom's Grange. There was certainly no doubt about *him* when he dashed into the fray.

Father McFadden had come into notoriety in connection with the murder of Inspector Martin of the Royal Irish Constabulary. This officer had a warrant for the arrest of Father McFadden in connection with the Land Agitation. He unfortunately attempted to execute it at the moment the priest, clad in his vestments, was leaving the altar after saying Mass. There was a scuffle, stones were thrown, and sticks used. In the *melée* Inspector Martin was killed by a blow from a stone. No one ever discovered whose hand it was that threw the stone. Probably the man who threw it did not know. Four men of the crowd were arrested and sentenced to penal servitude for a number of years.

After this affair, to a great many good folk Father McFadden was a very terrible person. Others knew him as a zealous, devoted priest, who had made his poverty-stricken Glen in the North-West of Ireland as nearly an ideal place as possible.

To myself he was an alarming person at that moment, when the breach was still wide between priests and Parnellites. We had scarcely arrived at the little hotel —and let me pay tribute to "McBrides," the kindliest, sweetest, cheapest little hostelry!—when we heard the formidable tapping of a blackthorn in the hall downstairs; we were only just taking off our hats preparatory to a meal. It was almost as ominous a sound as the never-to-be-forgotten tapping of Pew's stick in "Treasure Island."

Up came the little pink-frocked, bare-footed waiting-maid, with a head of black satin curls and the cheeks of a damask rose.

"If ye please, ladies," she said, "'tis Father McFadden is inquirin' your business in the Glen, and would ye mind steppin' down and speakin' to him?"

We looked at each other in consternation. The impatient tapping of the blackthorn went on downstairs. Supposing he were to lay it about our shoulders, with what Dr. Shaw, of the *Dublin Evening Mail*, called, when a priest had beaten back half a dozen of his parishioners from a Parnellite meeting, "A laying-on of hands by this very Roman Father." Supposing!

We summoned up courage and went downstairs to find that Father McFadden had no other intention or desire than the kindly one to welcome and entertain us.

He took possession of us then and there. We had to see the Glen. I can recall still the spotlessness of the little cottages, in some of which the last of the hand-loom weavers were at work. Father McFadden was engaged just then in the business of distributing seed potatoes. I do not remember from what source the seed came.

It was said that Father McFadden had declared " I am the Law of Gweedore." We used to call him the King of Gweedore. The Glen certainly flourished under its law and kingship. The men who had been sentenced for taking part in the riot that led to Inspector Martin's death were back in the Glen, having served their term, or a portion of it. They were leading men. They had come back proud possessors of a trade, knowing how to read and write.

After our tour of inspection we went home with Father McFadden to a meal. The delectable " McBrides " is at Bunbeg—just where the Atlantic tumbles against huge cliffs. It was cold April weather, with a high wind that blew sharp showers of sand in your face. The alarming autocrat had turned into a most friendly person, who accepted us—and never mentioned Parnellism. There was a certain magnanimity in that silence. He spoke of Miss Maud Gonne, who had come to Gweedore on horseback. " What did she want in Gweedore ? " he asked. He always wanted to know what any person from the outside world wanted in Gweedore. Donegal " of the Strangers " was well guarded at this outpost from foreign invasion.

I have sometimes thought that Father McFadden entrusted me to some extent with his rehabilitation. Various other persons have so entrusted me since I became a writer of Reminiscences. Implicitly or explicitly, they have said to me " Tell this about me when I am gone," or " Deny that for me." I do not think Father McFadden is " gone." I think he is still administering a parish in Donegal, no doubt with great success. There is another side to the popular belief among English and Anglo-Irish Protestants that the Irish people are under the thumb of the priests. Lord Killanin said to me once that it was easier to administer the British Empire than to govern some Irish parishes. You have no formula for the Irish Celt.

During the session after the meal at Father McFadden's he began to talk of the affair of Inspector Martin—as though he wanted us to hear his apologia. Suddenly, in a dramatic moment, he whirled us out of the house to go over the scene of the tragedy so that we might better understand. There was not a glimmer of light. As we left the lit house we entered impenetrable darkness, filled with the shock and thunder of the Atlantic as it broke against the cliffs and fell back again.

A little avenue of close shrubs or trees led to the church. It was dense blackness. We were rushed along it to the vestry door. Then the dramatic recital began.

" Here I stepped out, still wearing my vestments ; he came and put a hand on my shoulder ; I tried to tell him not to do it, that it was a dangerous thing to do ; but there rose the greatest tumult and noise ever you heard. The people dragged me from him and hustled me along here thinking to save me. He was a brave fellow and he faced them like a lion. I wish he hadn't been so brave for his own sake. I struggled to get to him to protect him, but the people were determined to save me whether I liked it or not. Here he stood up among them, just in this spot. . . ." This recital went on in the darkness through which we had to feel our way. We retraced the whole happening by slow steps. At last we were back in the house again, to the intense relief of one of us, at least. I sat down in the armchair by the fire, as one escaped from an ordeal.

"The poor fellow!" said Father McFadden; "it was terrible that I could not help him. I saw it from an upstairs window. They kept me a prisoner. What could I do against so many determined to save me? They could not hear my voice below for the noise that was going on. They were completely out of hand. It all happened within a few minutes. It has been a great trouble to me ever since that I could not save him."

His voice dropped suddenly. There had been agitation in it. He said: "He died there on the hearthrug at your feet. The anger died out of them when they saw what they had done. They carried him in here. The poor fellow; he was beyond all help."

I have often said that Irish murders are picturesque and dramatic where other murders are merely sordid. Perhaps I may be excused for harking back from this murder of Inspector Martin to the more than thirty years-old murder of the Huddys, Lord Ardilaun's bailiffs, whose bodies after death were tied up in sacks and flung into Lough Mask, not far from where I write this tale. The story was told to me the other day by a Mayo man who lived through those terrible times, and I shall try to reproduce the drama of it as far as I can:—

> "I was living in Cong then, and I knew Joe Huddy well. He wasn't a Western man. Many a time I saw him going down the street with drink on him and he shouting, 'Up Kerry!' He was a Kerry man. He was an old man when I knew him first, twenty years before the murder. I believe he was always old. He didn't dress like the people of these parts. His hair was fair and straight, falling down on his neck. He wore a Caroline hat, a brown frieze coat, and corduroy knickers with boxcloth leggings that ended in spats over his shoelaces. A queer

thing about him was that he used to kneel outside the chapel at Mass. Many a time I saw him kneeling on a big flat stone just beyond the chapel door.

"It was after the famine years he made his name as a bailiff. D'Arcy of Houndswood was broke and his property sold in the Encumbered Estates Court. There were a lot of evictions on the estate and Joe was the bailiff. He was very good at the work; for when others of the Sheriff's posse held back Joe 'ud be up on the thatch of the wretched cabins with a crowbar, tearing the creatures' little homes to pieces. By this the people were prevented going back into the cabins, and had only the roadside, unless some charitable neighbour took them in.

"There was an eviction one day at a place called Townroe, and it used to be said that twelve cradles stood out in the rain that day and each cradle with a baby in it. The mothers had ranged the cradles to get what shelter they could from the bitter wind under a low wall that edged a little lane running down to an old graveyard. They were thinking to stay there the night, as the lane was a No Man's Land. They had gathered sticks and lit a fire, and had hung a pot from a stick in the wall, and with a few handfuls of Indian meal they had they were making stirabout. Joe came up with a great pretence of friendliness by the way that he was going to light his pipe at the fire. He stood there, puffing at the pipe and talking quietly, till the stirabout was near cooked, and then, before anyone could hinder him, he pulled down a big stone from the top of the wall right into the pot, and the bottom was knocked out of the pot, and, all the poor hungry people's food spilled out on them. And with that he ran away.

"The parish priest of Cong at that time was Father Waldron, a very holy, good man. He denounced Joe for his cruel act the following Sunday at Mass, and said he: 'He'll never die till he's put in a bag,' a saying the people couldn't make out, only that they took it to mean that Joe wouldn't get Christian burial. But it was a prophecy, as was proved in time.

"The time came—and that was in the midst of the troubles—when Joe and his grandson, a young man of nineteen or so, drove from Cong to the village of Cloughbrack, by way of Clonbur, to serve processes for Lord Ardilaun. They reached the village by a rugged stony path, having left the car and horse with the driver on the side of the road to wait for them. The people of the village set upon the Huddys. The boy took to his heels, and ran for his life across the fields, with a couple of men after him, and they killed him.

"Some of the men had revolvers, and they fired them into

Joe. The story was that they got him into a yard. At the first shot he fell, sitting down, on the dunghill. While the fellows were loading the revolvers again, Joe kept calling out to them in Irish: 'Tharraidh aristh a diabhal!' ('Come on again, ye divil!') And so till they finished him. He died game.

"Meanwhile the man that was driving them waited a bit and then quietly drove back to Cong; but said nothing about Joe and the grandson till the hue and cry started and then he told where he'd left Joe. Perhaps he guessed what was going on and thought it wisest to keep out of it; and small blame to him!

"Well, they tied the two bodies up in sacks and for fear the blood would betray them, they carried the sacks in a turf-creel all along the river-bed from the village down to the lake, so that the clear, running stream would carry away the dripping blood. And they dropped them into the lake.

"At first they could get no word at all of what had happened to Joe and the grandson. The police used to be up examining the people, and they were trying to get it out of the children. But the men that did it had got Joe inside the yard, so the children couldn't see the murder done. And all they got out of the children was—they were all Irish-speaking: 'Ni fhaca me Joe marbh na beo' ('I did not see Joe dead or alive').

"A few weeks after the murder a message was sent to the police, and it was told in letters cut out of a newspaper to say that they'd find Joe in Lough Mask. So a pinnance was sent over from H.M.S. *Banterer*, then lying in Galway Bay, with a crew of bluejackets; and for three weeks they harrowed and dragged the bottom of the lake till they brought up the sacks with the bodies."

I have mentioned in my "Twenty-Five Years" that I was present at the trial in Green Street, Dublin, of the Huddy murderers. Quite by accident, I was put to wait till a seat in the court was found for me, into the room with the relatives of the men who were being tried for the murder. They were all women-folk, and I can remember to this day the strange pathos of the hooded figures, some of them nursing a baby at the breast, seated on the wooden benches around the walls. They were like so many Fates, these creatures of a destiny too strong for them, helpless, uncomplaining, doomed. Afterwards

I saw the trial of the Irish-speaking peasants for the murder. The evidence had all to be translated by an interpreter. I remember how they protested their innocence, their arms extended in the shape of a cross, murmuring their deep Irish, their tragic, haggard faces uplifted to the judge who was to condemn them.

The talk flows on :

"The men that were arrested were lodged in Galway Gaol, and while the depositions were being taken they were brought over to Cong every day. One day, as they walked along the street, the wife of one, named K——, by way that she wanted a word with him, walked by him and slipped a £3 note into his hand. He found a way of speaking with a woman who was giving information, and he passed her the £3, whispering, 'Say nothing about me, ye divil.' So, when she named the others she left him out of it ; and he turned informer and got off.

"Here's another story about the same K——. He had to have a police escort for fear the people would kill him. It was a good while after that another man in these parts was brought over by *The Times* to give evidence at the Commission. The people thought very bad of that act of his, and when he came back no one would look the side of the road he was walking on. There was himself and there was K——, and the two of them walking about with a couple of big Constabulary men at their heels, and they were no more civil to them than other people. Well, he was feeling pretty sick of his life one day when he caught sight of K—— with his escort. 'Here's a man,' said he to himself, 'that'll be glad enough to speak,' and he calls out : 'Hello, K——!' Only it was in the Irish. K—— turned on him, and says he, 'How dare you address me, you damned informer!' 'Informer yourself!' said the other fellow. 'What's the difference between us, except that you hanged four men ?' 'There's the difference of the world between us,' said K——, 'for I informed to save my neck, and you informed to put dirty money in your pocket.' With that they set to, and they hammered each other till neither could see out of his two eyes. And all the time the four policemen lay stretched on the grass —it was fine summer weather—playing a game of Spoil-Five, while the two blackguards pounded each other black and blue."

This is a long digression from Father McFadden and his description of Inspector Martin's murder, but I hope the story is worth it.

As we left Father McFadden's house we had to stand and look up at the window from which he tried in vain to control the people. After that we turned about and went back through the roar of the sea and the driven sand to "McBrides," which was showing a cheery light out into the darkness.

We were certainly "objects" by this time. One of Mrs. Shorter's sketches is of ourselves informing the rose-cheeked Phyllis of the inn that we were considered extremely beautiful where we came from. By this time our clothes were past praying for; our faces were "peeling," our hair was dried by the winds and the sea to something as unsympathetic as hemp, our eyes watered, our noses were bulbous and deeply tanned with the sun and the wind. The little girl only said "Did ye now, Miss?" when we told her that we had taken prizes at a beauty show. That was the moment Mrs. Shorter selected for her sketch.

Father McFadden had decreed that we were not to leave Donegal without seeing the cabins of the evicted tenants at Bloody Foreland. Now this meant a immense détour round the coast instead of cutting across country to Letterkenny, which was to be the next stage of our journey. We knew better than to object to the Law of Gweedore, but we thought we might outwit it. We were tired of driving; we were in a hurry to get back; the détour would cost us at least a sovereign to say nothing of the dreadful "whip-money." We agreed to everything and ordered our car for 8 o'clock next morning, at which hour we knew the Law would be safely saying his Mass.

We felt like a pair of conspirators as we sat at breakfast. The car came round to the door. The bill was presented. It was ridiculously little, and the payment for the car was absent.

" But—— the car ? " we said.

" 'Tis all right about the car. Father McFadden paid for that. He bid us put in a bit of lunch as ye have a long journey. Come back again soon ! "

It was a long journey—some fifty miles by car—and it went on all day. Of its items I remember the incredible houses at Bloody Foreland, mere heaps of stone, with a few scraws atop, between wild bogs and the sea. You had to go in almost on all fours, and when you were in you could see nothing for the darkness, and the acrid turf and green-wood smoke which made your eyes water and your throat ache. Wigwams of a very wretched kind. The days are gone by when human beings could inhabit anything quite so bad, although here in prosperous Mayo of to-day many of the inhabited cottages are still unfit for human habitation.

Next came Gortahork, where we gave up our car—there was no " whip-money "—and waited for the mail-car. We had lunch at Gortahork. It was a Friday, so the lunch consisted of boiled eggs, hot cakes, griddle bread and butter, honey, jam, and tea. We also had a flask filled with brandy which had lain at Gortahork perhaps since it was smuggled from France in the eighteenth century. We paid a bill of one shilling and sixpence. I have always since remembered Gortahork for its moderate charges.

Item —— we had a passage perilous by the mail-car, which was an outside car, driven at a speed proper to the conveyance of the mails. We sat on one side ; at the other was a pile of empty parcel post baskets. They were high in air and our feet trailed on the ground. Sometimes we hung over immense abysses—valleys far, far below, full of enormous boulders, our road being a mere shelf on the mountain-side. When this happened the driver congratulated us on having a beautiful view.

Sometimes we were the safe side of the car and scraped our knees along the mountain wall. The rate at which we scampered down these roads was terrifying. We dislodged the road as we went and it fell in a shower of stones to the valley below. We asked the driver if anyone ever fell off and he said that now and again a tourist did; "but they falls soft: divil a bit of harm it does them!"

And so back to Ballyshannon next day by a train *à rire*, which crawled along the pleasant valleys full of little mountain lambs, and rust-coloured streams from the hills full of iron ore, and to the hotel of Mrs. Sadd, an odd name. The lady herself lamented that her sons should have taken it to America. "Not a name to introduce into a new country," she said, and shook her head. It was one of those huge barracks of hotels you find in Irish country towns, with their great rooms, where a dead-and-gone gentry danced and ate hunt dinners and assize dinners, ghostly places full of shadows and dreams. I had a chill in the night and an ague, intensified by the fear that the great barrack of a place, with its winding maze of passages by which no one could possibly find an outlet from the house, might take fire. My life was saved by the Gortahork brandy, or I thought it was—and I had a special disrelish for death just then.

While we were in Donegal the devoted servant and friend of Lady Aberdeen who had arranged my journey—the same who had brought the fast outside car to the Convent that day—took ill and died. I had another glimpse of Lady Aberdeen at the Shelbourne Hotel. The widow was with her when I arrived. Lady Aberdeen came to meet me and held my two hands in hers while she talked. "She is *so* brave!" she said, and took me in to see the crushed little figure in its new black.

I remembered it the other day when I found first one, then another young widow of the war with this gracious woman, whom all that serve her adore. They had the same crushed, small look in their weeds, the same brightness of acute pain in their cheeks and their eyes :—

> " Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realised."

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT SUMMER

On May 1st, 1893, I said good-bye to the old happy irresponsible life. I was going to London to be married and to settle there. I remember the last night at home. It was Sunday, and a great many people had come with good wishes and offerings, and it had been a very crowded and exciting day. I was going by the mail-boat in the morning, which meant getting up very early—the boat used to go then, I think, at 7 o'clock—and Hester Sigerson took me away from my brother-in-law, who wanted me to play a last game of Nap with him—we were sad card-players in those days—saying that I must have sleep. I got up about 4 in the morning. My father, of course, was coming with me to the boat. My sister woke up to say good-bye—and it was over. I stepped up at the last moment to look once again at my pretty room, the nest of love which my father had made for me, and I can remember now going down through the silent house, full of shadows, the traces of last night's revelry still lying about. And so through the sleeping country to Westland Row and Kingstown and the mail-boat. There were not many to see me off—not as many as there would have been if I had gone at a more comfortable time of day—but I remember among those who came Ion Murray, now a Canon of Winnipeg Cathedral, who had been with us all through the Parnell fight. He was, and is an elect soul. He was the son of Dean Murray, the Rector of Ballymena, and was a student at T.C.D. when we became friends over the

Parnell split. Ion was the gentlest of souls. His brown eyes were soft as velvet. He was a tremendous Parnellite, but I remember that when we were all using violent language concerning our Chief's enemies, Ion Murray would go no further than to call—say Mr. Timothy Healy—" a cod." It seemed very inadequate.

Stay—I remember, or think I do—my diary is blank for many days—that that very last Sunday I had among my special guests Douglas Hyde and Willie Yeats. There was a young Cork barrister, James Sheehan, who usually came with Douglas Hyde. Willie Yeats sent Sheehan through the yellow square into the place beyond, rather to my discontent, for I disliked these things. James Sheehan was very much of a medium, for he certainly presented the appearance of a person in a hypnotic trance. Step by step he wandered through the strange country till he met an old man who had a message for one of the party. It proved to be for me. I was summoned to step through the yellow square. I refused. " Ask him for a sign by which she may recognise that he has a message for her," said Willie Yeats. " He says that it is connected with a ring set with three stones which she is wearing. It is most important to herself that she should hear."

Well, I confess that I was vaguely perturbed. They were urging me. I had a sudden fear. Supposing that one were to step out of safe-keeping, away from one's own happy beliefs and faiths, into those queer places, might not harm come? The message remained undelivered.

I watched from the boat, as long as I could see it—my sight was better then than now—my father's figure in his whitish grey overcoat. He had walked to the end of the pier to see the last of me. I often wondered afterwards how I could have left him.

I was with my dear Meynells till my wedding day, and narrowly missed being late for my wedding because there was no clock in the Meynells' house and I had a watch that did not keep time.

We went to live at Ealing. It was a most wonderful year. Fine weather had set in in March, immediately after St. Patrick's Day—the Saint, according to Irish tradition, is supposed to take the cold stone out of the water. He did, that year. The east wind blew from March till June, but it was a hot east wind. Crops ripened and were gathered in May and June. That was high summer, if you will. There were second crops of everything. The summer recalled that wonderful summer in Pater's "Imaginary Portraits," when the God Dionysus came to earth again.

The white and pink blossom had flooded the garden of the little old-fashioned house at Ealing before I came to it. Blossom time was over when I came, and the little fruit was on the trees. At that time Ealing ceased at our avenue, which was hidden and swathed up in greenery. At the back were the fields and no more town between us and Harrow. The sheep were in the fields at the end of the garden. We used to hear the tinkle of the leader's bell. From our upper windows we could look across five miles of country to Harrow church tower—" the Visible Church " of George the Third.

Our cottage was very old-fashioned. It was an old-fashioned road altogether. The little houses were still called the Barracks because the Duke of Kent's officers-in-waiting had lived there. Kent House, of Queen Victoria's girlhood, was at the junction of the grassy, half-made roads. There was the running stream in the fields which had supplied the Duchess's dairy. The old-fashioned people still talked of " the village."

The heat that summer was excessive. I think of the fields and the gardens all smoking under it. The fruit ripened in the gardens long before its time. Ealing was flooded with roses as it is every year, but the roses soon fainted from excessive heat, despite the watering going on in a cool silver shower in every garden of evenings.

My husband had coaching to do at an army crammer's in Kensington. Pat, my St. Bernard, had followed me to England, and he and I used to wander in the fields. There we discovered the muddy Brent, so unlike the crystal-clear flowing streams of Ireland, and Pat wallowed in it, contracting a skin-trouble from the dirt. There were a few pleasant old farmsteads dotted about in the valley. We had been some time there before we discovered Perivale Church and its delightful parsonage, by which my walks were to go for many a year.

One day we went to lunch at Dr. (now Sir William) Robertson Nicoll's house at Frognal. I had had a correspondence with Dr. Nicoll before my marriage, and, soon after we were settled in, Mrs. Nicoll had come to call. It was the hottest of hot days. I remember the journey to and from Hampstead as a dazed dream. At Bay Tree Lodge the windows were all closed "to keep the heat out." It was a literary party. The guests, as well as I remember, were Maarten Maartens; Sir J. M. Barrie; Mr. Espinasse, a famous journalist in his time, and his daughter, who bore a foreign title; Sir George Douglas; Miss Jane Stoddart; Miss Annie Macdonell, and ourselves. I sat on the host's right. Opposite was the handsome face, the fine figure and bearing, of that most charming Dutchman whom we called Maarten Maartens, Mr. Van der Poorten Schwartz. I hope I am right about the name. He had beautiful manners. He spoke English delicately, as only the perfect English-speaking foreigner can speak it. Sir J. M. Barrie was on my right hand. Mr. Espinasse talked a great deal in the manner of the 'fifties. Barrie, I think, was the real lion of the occasion.

He had come in very shyly, with his eyes down, rather late for lunch. He seemed to speak with a hesitating difficulty. He had come to his own by this time as novelist and playwright. The Thrums books were behind him and "The Little Minister." "Walker, London," was making its great hit. He was on the eve of his marriage to Miss Ansell, who was playing in the piece.

I admired Sir J. M. Barrie tremendously. More, I had felt intensely pleased and proud because Dr. Robertson Nicoll had reported to me something pleasant which the little great man had said about my lyrical faculty. He was very amiable to me. I remember that he denounced the interviewing craze, then in full swing, saying that he objected to the colour and fashion of his necktie being set forth in print. He spoke with excessive bitterness.

And this leads up to a rather unfortunate incident. I was and had been for some years entirely, or almost entirely, absorbed in my devotion to Mr. Parnell. Of course, the topic came up. I told him things. Then to my amazed delight he said, "No Irishman or woman could have felt more for that great man than I did, and Quiller Couch felt with me"—or words to that effect.

Well, if he had understood what the fight for Parnell meant to the Parnellites he could have measured my delight. We were a small number comparatively, still with our backs to the wall, and arrayed against us much of what had been dearest to us, was still dear. I, at least, had always the feeling of being one of a forlorn hope. When I began writing I had been hailed by the priests as the new young Catholic poet. The priests had sent my first little volume of poems into edition after edition, to the bewilderment of my publisher, Mr. Kegan

Paul, who used to say that mine was the only poetry that sold with him. My name had been fragrant in presbyteries and community-rooms ; and my Parnellism meant my being cast out—almost as a heretic, a schismatic. England, I must say, had made no sign. English Liberals following the lead of Mr. Gladstone were against our idol ; they had given the word for his betrayal. One would suppose that a large body of English gentlemen, at least, must have been moved to ruth at the baiting of a great man ; but they had made no sign, any more than the party of gentlemen in Ireland. Indeed, the young men of T.C.D. hooted the great broken man—no, not broken ; only death broke his cause, but not him—as he went by. In those days I could have wept with joy for any adherent, anyone, who understood, much less a man of Barrie's eminence.

I repeated this bit of conversation in a Letter I was then writing weekly for a Boston literary paper. It never occurred to me that it might be taken as repeating a private conversation. To me it was only new flowers for my hero's sad grave. But Sir James Barrie, I believe, thought otherwise and was exceedingly wroth with me. I hope, if he ever sees this, he will accept my explanation and extenuation, my apologia, which I did not venture to offer him in any other shape.

A little later Miss Stoddart came to interview me at Ealing for the *British Weekly*, and I remember telling her, as I had told Sir James Barrie, how my father and I exchanged lockets as a parting gift. In the one I gave him were my photograph and Mr. Parnell's ; in the one he gave me were his and Mr. Parnell's. He had asked for that. " Put one of Charlie's with your own," he had said. We had been used to talk of Bonny Prince Charlie and other Jacobite matters, applying them to Mr. Parnell.

My first public appearance after I was married was at the Women Writers' Dinner, to which I went with Mrs. Meynell, my companion at most of those dinners. That dinner is hazier in my memory than the first one I attended in 1889. I can only remember that Frances Wynne sat beside me, prodigiously excited over the London life, after the enclosed garden of her life in Collon, a Co. Louth village.

All during that summer my father used to appear at odd, unexpected moments. He would be seized by a sudden longing for me and would come without warning. I remember being awakened by a sharp rat-tatting at the door before anyone was up in the morning, and there he would be, having arrived by the morning mail and driven across from Willesden. He always brought a stock of provisions—ducks, green peas, eggs, chickens, butter—everything edible which he could cram into the hamper. These were flying visits. His heart hunger assuaged, he would be off again. I can see him, indeed, winding his watch preparatory to going to bed and very sleepy—having come over by the day mail and arrived in time for dinner—and hear him saying, " Well, love " —he always called me " love "—" now I've seen you I think with the blessing of God I'll catch the morning mail. There's a deal for me to see to at home."

He did not catch the morning mail—a well-nigh impossible feat in those days from Ealing, since the outgoing mail did not stop at Willesden—but he caught the night mail. Those flying visits were indeed very dear and lovely. We used to go to see him off at Willesden. He could make himself very comfortable in a train if he had room enough. He would sleep a night journey through stretched along a seat, if he had not a companion worth talking to. One of those nights a kindly English gentleman darkened the lamp for him and sat bolt upright in the gloom while he slept.

Another night he had dear debonair Jim Carew for his travelling companion. Jim Carew was one of Mr. Parnell's henchmen, and a very gay, gallant Irish gentleman. He had a second-class ticket. My father commandeered him into his first-class. I remember Jim Carew's bright laughing protest, and his ultimate yielding. We heard afterwards that he had "to pay the difference"; but perhaps the night's talk was worth it. I am sure my father would have paid it if he was permitted.

I had a good many visitors that summer. Marie Belloc occupied my little spare room now and again. The Meynells came, and John O'Leary and the Yeats family and others. Very often Frances Wynne came from Stepney Green. Much as she was in love with London, she envied me my rurality—the little grass borders of the long garden path under the apple trees, the fruit and flowers, the country beyond, the grass plot at the end of the garden where I used to sit surrounded by greenery, with a huge Japanese umbrella for shelter, listening to the sounds of the gardens and the fields. The last time she came was early in July, and the big purple passiflora was out over the little house. In front of the house was a glorious chestnut tree, which was beautiful at all times. We stood under the chestnut tree while she admired the cottage covered in purple and green and the countrified aspect of the place, all fresh and sweet even in that hot summer, before going back to Stepney Green.

A few weeks later a letter came to say that she was the mother of a little son. My father was with me just then, and, his harvesting being over, stayed several days, during which we did a good deal of sight-seeing. I never got in the letter of congratulation she was waiting for. She died on the 9th of August. By some strange chance I did not hear of it for a week. Then came Willie Yeats with a friend one beautiful evening, and mentioned quite easily and casually that she was dead.

At first I would not believe it. I was enraged that anyone should have said it. I prayed that it might not be true, through the time that intervened before I could make certain what I knew was certain, although I would not own it. I can remember a day when I went about my work: writing a little, painting bookshelves—we were all mad about painting everything with Aspinall's enamel in those days—limp as a rag with the great heat and sick with apprehension. There were moments when I persuaded myself she was not dead. The letter which had not been written, and could never now be written, was like a crime. I must have been alone during that hot sick day, which I can recall so well, for no one came to comfort me, to hope with me that it was some terrible blunder. I heard afterwards that she asked for many days, morning after morning, if there was a letter from me, till she ceased to think about this world. That unwritten letter lay heavy on my heart for many a day.

Professor York Powell was another visitor. He used to come with Mr. Yeats and sit in the garden. The first time he came we asked them, after some hesitation, to stay and dine, explaining that we had only salt beef to give them. I suppose we had exaggerated notions of the sophisticated appetite of an Oxford Don. Anyhow, York Powell was not very donnish. He said that salt beef was his passion, and he certainly seemed to enjoy it.

Meanwhile I was finding new avenues of work—new editors and publishers. Mr. Shorter—"of the *Sketch*," as I call him in my diary—was a most pleasing discovery. There were times, in those early years, when his acceptance of my work made all the difference between affluence and ruin. It must be remembered that those were days when a ten-pound note was one's salvation, and even a smaller sum enabled one to fling off all one's responsibilities and go holidaying in Ireland. I have often sighed for that time since. However, Mr. Shorter "of the *Sketch*" proved a most kind and generous editor, and I was soon writing for the *Sketch*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *English Illustrated*, and various other magazines and papers which were at one time or another under his control. I remember my first view of him, during the Journalists' Congress in the September of that year. It must have been at the Imperial Institute, I think, where there was a reception, and we heard Dan Leno and, I think, that fine artist, Albert Chevalier. Marie Belloc pointed him out to me as he walked across the room alone. "That is Clement Shorter, a very important person," she said. He was then controlling several papers and was full of plans for others. His friendship had an important effect on my fortunes—I may say our fortunes, since my husband was also writing short stories for the Ingram publications. He had a great interest in letters and was certainly a generous paymaster.

Apropos of the visit of the Journalists to London there was another day when I lunched with Marie Belloc and went to hear Zola speak at what must have been, I think, Lincoln's Inn Hall. Of Zola's paper I have little memory, and I think the short-bearded realist was obscured for me by the presence of Sir Charles Russell on the platform. Sir Charles had a singularly compelling eye. He looked at me and I looked away. Some modesty or shyness prevented my showing that I recognised him, and the embarrassment of sitting exactly under those piercing eyes must, I think, have prevented my trying to follow M. Zola. I am not sure that I was quite satisfied with myself about doing honour to the famous Frenchman. The simplicities of my Irish up-bringing still constrained me, and Zola was on my Index. He has never been off it indeed. Some years later I was staying at Ockley, in a bookless inn, and went over to Dorking to borrow from Marie Belloc, Marie Lowndes by that time. She thought I might endure "Le Paradis des Dames" in Vizetelly's English edition. But oh, I couldn't. I realised the tremendous way in which you heard every sound, saw every meticulous item of the life of the great shop; but oh, the book flooded me with a repulsive dreariness. The deadly *milieu*, the tolerance of low ideals—more than tolerance—were bad enough; the coarse, slobbery illustrations finished me. Will people go on reading Zola? Do they go on reading him? Then surely no one will want him in the great new days after the war is over.

The record of that year is full of business of many kinds. Many visitors. W. B. Yeats often came. And Jim Alderson, the young soldier of whom I gave a little account in "Twenty-Five Years," came one September day, much changed from the boy with the honest eyes, in the shabby homespuns, whom I had parted from four years earlier. This was a very immaculate young man-about-town to all appearance; but I very soon discovered that he himself had not altered at all, that the honest eyes were the same; that he was just the same simple, lovable, chivalrous boy I remembered.

We walked together across the fields, by Perivale Church, and the little footbridge over the Brent, deeply cut with intertwined hearts and darts and the initials of lovers in a true lovers' knot. It was all quite lovely and countrified then, before the days of golf links and Ealing Tenants; and the larks were in a tangle up in the sky as I dare say they are to-day. We went on to the "Ballot Box," where we had a flagon of brown Burton. There is a smart new "Ballot Box" there now, but it is all sadly changed for those who love the old order; and I dare say we should not find the berry-bright brown Burton, to use the adjective of an Irish poet, nor perhaps would we have the same capacity to enjoy it. The " Ballot Box " at that time was a real country inn, no smart gimcrackery at all, but honest and homely, with the garden of a country inn attached, in which you could drink the brown beer. Another day Jim Alderson and my husband went cycling together, and, as they lay on the grass in Bushey Park, were accosted by a particularly evil specimen of the tramp, quite ready for violence. The Irishman would have given him short shrift ; but the young English soldier lay on his elbow while he argued the ruffian out of his ill-humour, finally sending him off with a fill of baccy and more to follow, at peace with all mankind. This little incident is worth recalling for the sake of this brave and sweet-natured young soldier who was killed in South Africa. At the time of his death he was a captain in the Royal Irish Regiment, in which my young son is now a second lieutenant. One feels how much he would have wished to live for the great war, if he could have foreseen it.

Another day I went to see Christina Rossetti, then fast failing. I remember that before I went to Torrington Square—I must have been too early for my appointment—I spent some time looking at shops in the Tottenham Court Road. I do not know that it was a fitting preparation for what was really a dying bed, and the dying bed of a saint, but I have always had an incurable passion for shop-windows ; and even now, among the Mayo bogs, my heart lifts with longing towards a walk down Regent Street—the sunny side—and through the Burlington Arcade into Bond Street, that promenade which was one of the joys of my London life.

Christina lay on a sofa, obviously very ill. She was kindness itself, and there was the something of the old convention of cheerfulness about her. I think something of old age must have departed from the house. I had known it with the old mother and the old Misses Polidori, Christina's aunts, in it. I think I must always have been at Torrington Square in dark weather, or perhaps the memory of my first visit stayed with me as an association of wet roadways, and gas-lamps twinkling in the pools and on the wet leaves of the laurels and laurestinus in the oblong that was Torrington Square.

That autumn day in 1893 was brisk and sunny. Windows were open, and what air was possible in London or in Bloomsbury was in the room. Christina insisted upon sitting up to receive me, although obviously it was a painful effort, and when I protested she lay down again with a sigh of relief. I told her that people wanted to know something about her health. She resigned herself to being interviewed, if I would, without any appearance of resignation. " Ask me whatever you like," she said. It seemed cruel to trouble her, lying there obviously a very sick woman, even though the news was asked not for the general public, but for the public which loved her religious poetry. I said : " I won't ask you anything. I have only just come to see for myself how you are." " That is very kind," she said, with obvious relief. " Now we can talk easily, and I shall not feel as though I were sitting to be photographed." I spent half an hour with her in quiet conversation, mainly about my own personal affairs. She must always have lived the life of a hermit. She did not even know her London. " Ealing ? " she said vaguely. " Where is Ealing ? Hammersmith way ? " She knew very little beyond Bloomsbury. People who do not know shudder at the idea of a conventual life. Well, every convent I have ever known was light and bright, exquisitely clean, full of flowers and glimpses of greenery. Christina, I suppose, had originally settled down in Bloomsbury to be near her brothers. But quite close to London were gardens and fields, even at Ealing, not so many stations away from Gower Street by Torrington Square. It must have been at some time or other a mortification of the natural impulses of the poet to be shut up in Torrington Square. Duty to the old might have been done just as well in a little house with a garden, but Christina was probably one of those who find mortification sweet. I asked her that day how she endured the London life. "I have missed the flowers," she said.

"Write what you will of me when I am gone," she said, as we parted. I never saw her again, though she lingered on for a year or so afterwards.

Madame Belloc used to say that the word Christina used most often in her poetry was "worms." She certainly often used it. I remember in the days when I was mad about the pre-Raffaelites that two men expressed repugnance of a violent kind for the women of Rossetti's pictures. Both men were doctors. I feel now that there was too much of the grave in Christina's poetry; but that doubtless was due to many things—her ill-health, her seclusion, her London life, her constant companionship during half her life with very old people. She wrote to me once from Torquay, where she had been sent for health. She longed for Torrington Square, just as another poet, May Probyn, longed for South Street, Park Lane, when she had been taken away to the country. The sweet country—May Probyn pretended only to find in it the barking of dogs, the bleating of sheep, the lowing of cattle, which tortured the night-hours and kept her from sleeping. She was a nervous invalid. But I suspect in her case that the country was too far away from the Jesuit Church, Farm Street, as I suspect in

Christina's case the seaside was too far away from St. Magdalen's, Brunswick Square.

I arranged my first prose book with Lawrence and Bullen in the autumn of that year, and came home very happy, with a cheque in my pocket. I shall not say how little or how big it was. It was at all events big enough for happiness and a bottle of champagne. In those reprehensible early years we often treated ourselves and each other to champagne—on quite insufficient grounds. Once it was when we had smuggled an infinitesimal dog on a railway journey, but that was later on when we went to Ireland often during the year. Perhaps I needed the champagne on the occasion of the sale of the book, since I had spent a portion of the day going over Newgate Prison, which was then about to be pulled down. I have no taste for horrors, and I have some detestable memories of the place. The death-masks of famous criminals; "Birdcage Walk," where the hanged were buried in quicklime under the flags, where I looked with something of a mixed feeling at the slab which covered O'Donnell, who shot James Carey, were bad enough. Worse, a sprightly official played the jest of locking me into the pitch-darkness of the condemned cell, which had had for its last inmate the horrible Mrs. Dyer. Oh, there was worse still in the place of execution. There was a ghastly realism about the way in which we were obliged to traverse the path to the gallows. Someone mentioned that a notorious criminal, still fresh in our memory, had gone gaily till the morning sun caught a bright bolt or chain of the scaffold and flashed it in his eyes.

I was "doing" Newgate for a weekly paper belonging to the *Manchester Guardian*, edited by Mr. Foster Fraser, and I did it thoroughly. I read through two dreadful volumes of "Chronicles of Newgate" by Major Arthur

Griffiths, with Hogarthean pictures of villainous people and scenes. I believe Newgate and those volumes must have given my surroundings a sickly tinge during a part of that autumn.

There was a day at the very end of December in that *annus mirabilis* when we went down to Brighton to smell the sea and brought back seaweed to keep the smell as long as we could. I had been sea-hungry during the hot summer. I remember York Powell telling me it was a malady common to Londoners. I never experienced it so acutely after that first year. But, good as Ealing was in those days, I was also hungry for the real country. We read the *Daily Chronicle* in those days. I used to gloat over the advertisements of country "pubs." They had always such delicious accessories, orchards, rose-gardens, meadows, pony and trap, etc., etc. John Lane, to whom I mentioned this delight, thought solemnly that to run a country "pub." would be an eminently suitable occupation for a literary couple.

CHAPTER IX

1894

I WAS very fortunate then, as now, in being acceptable to the editors I most admired. I had written for Frederick Greenwood; I had written, and was writing, for W. E. Henley. Now I was to arrive at writing for the *Pall Mall Gazette* under the brilliant and whimsical editorship of Mr. Henry Cust.

There was a certain touch between the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *National Observer*. The same brilliant young writers were contributing to each. We talked a deal of *Pall Mall Gazette* talk in those days. One of the features of the paper was a column entitled the "Wares of Autolycus." It was contributed by women. At that time the contributors included Mrs. Meynell,—Friday was her day and a notable day for the *Pall Mall Gazette* readers—Mrs. Marriott Watson, Mrs. Hubert Bland (E. Nesbit), Mrs. Dew Smith. Who were the others? I have forgotten. I used to listen at the Meynells' to the Autolycus talk as one who worships from afar off. That I could ever be one of the noble band would not have occurred to me. It would have been too presumptuous. Mr. Cust had also made the *Pall Mall Gazette* a notable place for poetry. All the poets were writing there—all the young poets, at least. The best to be had of the young literature was appearing there as well. The "follower" was sometimes a new Kipling story. It was the great day of the young writer, and Mr. Cust was his or her discriminating Mæcenas. The paper belonged to Mr. W. W. Astor, and doubtless the editor thought that a rich man's money could not be better employed than in encouraging the arts.

I crossed its coveted threshold with an article "A March Flood," which I fancied at the time as a pretty bit of writing. We had found the Brent in flood, as it occasionally was after a wet spell. One had a delightful sense of adventure in finding it swirling and rushing on its way to the Thames and the sea. It became really formidable at those times: it occasionally drowned people. It used to carry away the little bridges and isolate Perivale Church and Rectory. Someone had died at the Rectory of the shock of being in the sea, so to speak.

It was like a mountain river in spate rather than a bit of Cockneydom. We knew, but we used to conceal the fact from ourselves, that the flood was caused by the opening of the flood-gates of the Welsh Harp lake at Hendon. We liked to believe that it came from wild mountains and dark woodland spaces. When we saw from our upper windows that the Brent was in flood, adventure rioted through our veins. We *had* to rush down to the edge of the waters, where our familiar trees and hedgerows had suddenly become aquatic. The air that beat in our faces was like the air from great rivers and the sea.

I wrote my little article on the flood, being very careful about the phrasing, and that was the key which opened the door of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to me. A little later I knocked with a poem in my hand, and again the door was opened which was not to close against me for many years. It was always an adventure to write for the *Pall Mall* in those days. Mr. Cust's judgment was a tribunal one was delighted to pass. We heard that the editor was mad about poetry, especially good religious poetry, and that he used to walk about the office chanting Christina Rossetti's poems. Even the payment was an adventure. The editor paid as he liked the poem, so that one received all manner of sums and never knew what to expect. It was so much more interesting.

Mr. Cust or someone else edited that first little poem, which was called "Spring Longings." It had a dancing measure, with a redundant syllable which has often puzzled those who measure verse by a foot-rule. I hardly think it was Mr. Cust. The editor made my verse toe the line—as for example :—

"Below the mountains, fair and dim,
  My father's fields are spreading :
I'd rather tread the sward with him
  Than I would dance at a wedding."

That last line had to be made

"Than dance at any wedding"—

and so through the poem. However, I was too delighted at pleasing an editor whose taste and judgment I bowed before to object to small things.

There was a very brilliant band of writers working for the *Pall Mall* in those days. It was Bohemia, but a Bohemia which was not grimy. There were George Stevens, who died at Ladysmith ; "Bob" Stevenson, Louis's first cousin ; H. B. Marriott Watson ; G. S. Street, and many others. After the Cust *régime* was over L. F. Austin in the *Speaker* wrote a most delightful account of that gay period. He, too, had been in Arcadia, and there was none more brilliant. Mr. Cust himself used to write the leading articles, which set the discriminating to grinning from ear to ear. Only he could have headed a leading article about some controversy of the School Board—was it ?—in which the Rev. Mr. Diggle, a prominent person of those days, was concerned, "To Diggle I am Not Able": "To Beggle I am

Ashamed." Once in a railway carriage I saw a young lady hand an elder lady a copy of the *Pall Mall Gazette* with her finger on the title of the leading article. There was a rumour of the disgrace of Li Hung Chang, the Chinese statesman. The title of the article was "Li Chang, Hung?" We knew the young lady for one of the initiated.

The proprietor objected to this frivolity of Mr. Cust's; and after his remonstrance there appeared one evening the title, "The Leading Article."

During a very cold winter, when our visitors had fallen away and we were feeling how bad it was to drop into a strange London suburb from Dublin where we knew everyone, we depended almost piteously on the *Pall Mall Gazette* for gaiety. I do not think it ever failed us.

I ought to have mentioned that Mr. Cust himself was a poet; it was his own choice which made him an obscure one. There is one poem of his which I quote because it has all but remained anonymous. It seems worthy of a place in the anthologies. One wonders why the man who was capable of such passionate expression should have been content to give the world so little.

"NON NOBIS.

"Not unto us, O Lord:
Not unto us the rapture of the day,
The peace of night, or love's divine surprise;
High heart, high speech, high deeds mid honouring eyes:
For at Thy word
All these are taken away.

"Not unto us, O Lord:
To us Thou givest the scorn, the scourge, the scar;
The ache of life, the loneliness of death,
The insufferable insufficiency of breath:
And with thy sword
Thou piercest very far.

"Not unto us, O Lord:
Nay, Lord, but unto her be all things given!—
My light and life and earth and sky be blasted—
But let not all that wealth of love be wasted;
Let Hell afford
The pavement of her Heaven!"

White fire, or perhaps dark fire of a passion in anguish. No wonder one was proud when one's poems passed the tribunal of a man who could write like that. Henley and Cust had approved me. So had W. B. Yeats, A. E. Alice Meynell, Francis Thompson, Lionel Johnson; but the judgment of some of these might have been affected by friendship. That was provender for the dry days to come. Once, many years ago, a literary agent told me that Conrad had come into his office, and, a book of mine being on the table, had laid his hand upon it and said: "She can write." I hope it was true. It made me feel very proud.

From that time onward the *Pall Mall* took a great many poems and sketches from me. I had fifty poems in it one year. I remember because Lewis Hind stared at me in stupefaction one night at the Meynells when I mentioned the fact. "A poem a week!" he said "Why, it is an income!" I had a nearly twenty years' connection with the paper. The *Pall Mall* had been founded as a paper "Written by Gentlemen for Gentlemen." During Mr. Cust's editorship it may have been, as an organ for spreading the news, a newspaper *à rire*. It was sheer joy to the discerning; but I suppose the number of the discerning is too small to make the fortunes of a paper. But how we appreciated the *Pall Mall!* Every change that took place in it was a grief, and when the well-known and dear format changed, the fair clear front page, with the leading article, the "follower" and the short paragraphs below, it was something lost out of one's life. What joy every department almost was in those days. How we looked for the poem—"Occ Verse" as it was irreverently called in the composing room—for the "Autolycus," for the miscellaneous articles, for those front-page paragraphs, written by men of letters, as the "Autolycus" articles by women of letters.

The substance of many of these articles one remembers with delight over twenty years and more. They helped one sometimes through dark days when laughter must needs be mixed with tears.

In the April of 1894 my father was with us and was painted by J. B. Yeats, the poet's father. A two days' sitting was all that was possible, and the portrait, which I possess, although necessarily not a finished portrait, is a very brilliant *tour de force*. The picture lives and speaks. All during the two days' sitting York Powell sat by in the navy-blue suit he always wore, in which he looked like a skipper, and listened with delight to the stories my father told. They were the annals of a countryside. As he went on the tale branched off to tell of other poeple, into many backwaters, returning eventually to join the main stream. York Powell smoked and listened. They only adjourned for meals. Mr. Yeats, walking to and fro in the little room lined with books, with the high window full of the north light, asked a question now and again. His questions checked the meandering flow. "Damn it all, man, let me tell my story my own way," my father would say. All that has got into the portrait. Mr. Yeats sometimes did marvellous things, in this way, with a sitter who interested him strongly, especially if he was not given enough time to over-paint, as he was inclined to do, perpetually adding to and altering his pictures, as Willie has done with his poems, to their ultimate loss. Mr. Yeats was always painting his friends' portraits for nothing, just as the Dublin doctors used to treat all their friends and the hard-ups generally for nothing. Once when he ought to have been in London, or he thought he ought, or someone else thought he ought, he yet lingered in Dublin, till he was detached by a commission to paint the portrait of an unsympathetic person. That commission sent him flying like the wind.

My father paid me a week's visit that April of 1894. Again the cornucopia of Flora and Pomona must have broken on the world. My husband was in Ireland finishing up at T.C.D., where his scholarship had only just run out. I had been staying with the Meynells. London was very dusty in that dry, golden April when an open window brought in the dust of the streets and the noises. The Aylesbury Dairy in St. Petersburgh Place was close to Palace Court, and the screaming noise of the milk-cans and trolleys began as soon as London had closed its eyes for an hour or so in the small hours of the morning.

I came back to the little house newly spring-cleaned, the garden like a great bridal bouquet. Ealing was in riotous blossom as I drove up from the station. I was a few days alone with a maid-servant and the dogs—Codger, an Irish terrier, was by this time added to the establishment—before my father came. There was a strange light brightness over everything that April, a sense of benediction and of the world being made anew.

My father was like Santa Claus in those days. He used to carry me off to town and buy me what I would. For once I had the key of the shops. We bought old oak (?) in Tottenham Court Road and rugs and curtains at Liberty's. Those rugs and curtains are in use still. He was so generous that I had to hold his hand. He always bought the best. " If you want a good thing you must pay a good price for it," he used to say. So there was I fitted out with all manner of pretty things, and by the same dear loving hand which had given me the pretty room I had left behind in Ireland.

One of those days we went to lunch with Madame Belloc and Marie, and met Hilaire—Hilary to the family circle—down from Oxford for a day or two. He was then a lean, eager boy, with a wisp of hair over his forehead, who talked quickly and excitedly and had a suggestion of the Revolution about him. I remember his saying that he was the artist of the family and Marie the business woman ; but I was not so sure that he had not something of the business instinct and she a good deal of the artist, as she has proved since. I had a tremendous admiration then for Marie Belloc's many activities. I have now. She was doing journalism, and she had a wonderful system of filing data on all manner of subjects. Her ingenuity about articles amazed me. I would come in to find her writing an article on " Titled Mayoresses of the United Kingdom," or " The Layettes of the Royal Babies of Europe." She could put her hand in a moment on the thing she wanted. She was always going to and from Paris, where she collected the matter for many of her articles. She used to complain of being dead tired—and I am sure she had reason to be—with the most satin-smooth skin, eyes as untroubled as a baby's, and a look of extraordinary placidity. She used to work in this way. One day, much later on, I was lunching with her at Dorking, when the telephone rang. She always made her own sauces and she was compounding something very delicious when the ting-a-ling sounded. She let it go on till the ingredients were properly compounded. Then : " Hello ! " " Are you Mrs. Belloc Lowndes ? " " Yes, who are you ? " " *Sketch.* Can you give us five hundred words on Godfrey and Deane, married at St. Peter's, Cranley Gardens, to-day. By to-night's post ? " " Yes."

She dropped the receiver and came back again to her sauce.

"Katie—do you know anyone called Godfrey or Deane?"

I never knew how she did these things, but she always managed to do them. When the Duchess of Teck died, her death being unexpected, Marie sat up all night doing the biographical article for *The Times*, which had been caught napping for once.

In those early days I used to be open-mouthed at her earnings. "If I cannot make —— pounds a month I am ruined," she said to me one day. I thought it a great sum then.

There is a portrait of the Bellocs' beautiful grandmother in the Louvre. One realised the grandmother knowing the Bellocs. The grandmother's wonderful Dresden and beautiful lace lay about as though they were not precious at all, or their owners were too used to them to consider them in that light. Madame Belloc, the friend of George Eliot, who could tell you stories of all the great men of her day, was and is the most charming and interesting of old ladies—only dangerously and incurably young, as such great old ladies have a way of being. Marie Belloc was at that time certainly one of the prettiest things in London. I am not saying that she is not at this day.

Some time in the lovely May of 1894 I awoke in the dark hour before dawn to the sound of a bird or an angel singing. He was the very last nightingale to sing in London, and he came no more after that year. He had come every year for long to a thorn tree in what was still a field, now long built over with houses. We looked on at London sucking into its vortex the last of the country on its side of the Brent river. We could make revelations—of the ancient quarry-pits filled in with road refuse, upon which the jerry-built houses went up, the yet-unlaid untiled forecourts which had to be bridged by planks for the wheelbarrow of the builders' labourers over the dark waters below. Still there were lovely bits. Hanger Hill was yet pasture, with sheep and cattle grazing, and you could climb by a country lane past rose-wreathed farmhouses from Ealing to the higher ground of Mount Avenue. Still the valley was a valley of pig-farms, as it may be to-day—a survival of the days of Alfred, when all this was the Bishop of London's swine-forest. Still the old Middlesex lanes kept their winding ways. Still under the branching oaks in the autumn fields one met the herds of black pigs rooting for acorns as in Alfred's days. On the secluded road which led from Perivale Church to Alperton one might meet a rustic in a smock frock. You might make the long loop from West Ealing by Drayton Green and Perivale, Alperton, Park Royal (a new-fangled name), Hanger Hill, and Ealing proper, passing by only a manor-house, a farmstead, a labourer's cottage. The fields were full of lambs and sheep. So sequestered were they that it was something of an adventure to be deprecated to walk in them alone. I walked there many a year, with Pat, the St. Bernard; with Codger, the Irish terrier; with Paudeen, the most fascinating of nondescripts, part Irish terrier: he had the wisest, shaggiest little grey face imaginable. In a way he was dearest of all, and he took ten years of my life away when he went. But he was not even yet dreamt of. Still Pat majestically walked with me, and, going ahead, turned back if he met a suspicious stranger. The fields were full of larks, tangles of birds and sounds, ascending, falling, in a golden shower. Golf as yet was new. I remember one of those Sundays being instructed in the proper pronunciation by a young Army man.

My literary doings were many. My industry, as set forth in the pages of my closely-written little diary, amazes me. My voluminous reviews for the *Irish Daily Independent*, my couple of American Literary Letters—the *Pall Mall*, the *Westminster*, the *National Observer*, the *Speaker*, the *Sketch*, the *Graphic*, the *Illustrated London News*, many magazines: I think at one time or another I must have written for nearly every paper and magazine in London.

Meanwhile my first novel was on the stocks. It was undertaken at the suggestion of Messrs. Lawrence and Bullen, the most unconventional and delightful of publishers. Up to this time my concern with publishers had been mainly poetical. Mr. Lane and Mr. Elkin Mathews were then the poets' publishers, and their visits are chronicled in my diary of those years. But prose was a business matter. Messrs. Lawrence and Bullen had published my "Cluster of Nuts," a volume of short Irish sketches, contributed to the *National Observer*, the *Speaker*, the *Pall Mall*, and elsewhere. Now they suggested a novel.

Some time in the autumn of 1894—to be strictly accurate, I find it was the 8th of November—Harry Lawrence came to dinner to discuss the proposed novel. As might be supposed, it was an important occasion for us. We had at the time a stop-gap cook who was in her strictly professional days a barmaid. There was abundant reason for her relinquishing that profession.

The very agreeable publisher arrived, with a floral offering, at the hour named for dinner, which, I think, was the unfashionable one of 7 o'clock. The cook was not punctual. Time passed—7, 7.30, 8, 8.30, 9. I did not observe the passage of time, nor, I am sure, did the publisher; at least he did not seem to. Only the host was uneasy. Somewhere between 9 and 10 an excellent dinner was served—very much better than I could have hoped for. I only knew afterwards that the barmaid-cook had set the kitchen on fire and burnt the dinner; that the new sewing-woman, who had been very uncommunicative about herself, had suddenly stood up from her sewing and taken command; that a new dinner had had to be procured and cooked; that the sewing-woman proved to be a *cordon bleu*, who had cooked for the nobility and for at least one great old soldier. She was one of those cooks who are as important to the welfare of the world, albeit she affects a smaller circle, as a great doctor. It seemed cruel that age should wither her exquisite efficiency. Her name was Mrs. Hale. She stands to me for the virtues possessed by the old servants. For many years I found her good to lean on. She was perfectly honest, upright, prudent, careful, faithful, and efficient. Alas, that such as she must grow old and die!

Apparently I made a satisfactory arrangement with the publisher that evening. I am sure he liked his dinner when it came.

On November 27 of that year I first saw Francis Thompson. We dined with the Meynells and he was there, newly come back from Pantasaph. There was also Mr. Arthur Hutchinson, who has long been editor of the *Windsor*. I believe I talked to him rather than the poet, for I remember him more clearly; he was very eager about literature. Indeed, as far as regards Francis Thompson, I cannot pick out that occasion from many others. I remember him in his ugly yellowish tweed suit with the short pipe in his mouth or between his fingers, arguing, talking in a flood. Like a good many other poets I had known, he could be an intemperate talker.

On a Sunday in December my diary first mentions Lionel Johnson; but I am sure I saw him first in summer. I can see him coming down the garden, between the grass-borders, under the apple-boughs, treading daintily, with his gentle deprecating air. Our friendship ripened very soon. From that time onward he came and went as he would, and he often would. I remember his saying to me once: "This is the only house to which I would invite myself to breakfast if I felt like it." It was the measure of our intimacy.

On another evening of December on our way to dine with the Meynells we saw on the contents-bills of the evening papers: "Death of Robert Louis Stevenson." It was a sadness for us all that Tusitala was dead. A poem of mine on Stevenson's death appeared in the *National Observer* a few days later, bringing me, in course of time, from Samoa, "A Little Book for Mr. Stevenson's Friends," the very rare pamphlet which would have been much less rare if it had not been that some of the articles on Stevenson gave offence to Mrs. Stevenson, so that the issue was stopped, or so we were told. Henley wrote to me a little later concerning a poem of mine. "It drags and goes a little heavily and sadly, as though you were thinking of R.L.S." This revelation of personal grief and tenderness has a certain poignancy in view of the amazing article which Henley published about Stevenson later on, the gall and bitterness of which was due to some incautious saying of Stevenson's that had slipped into print. The very bitterness, I think, pointed to outraged love and faith.

On the Christmas Eve of that year we went to see York Powell at his house in Bedford Park. He had been appointed Professor of Modern History at Oxford, and I was to write an article about him. He came to the station with us and turned aside to a little nursery-shop at Turnham Green to buy me an armful of flowers—the delicious little narcissi that come shivering into London with their promise of spring just before Christmas, with mimosa from the South. I recall these things so that, incidentally, I may render an inestimable service to people who have much writing to do. I had been threatened with writer's cramp—I am not surprised looking at the infinitesimal characters in my diary, which almost need a magnifying glass to read them. I casually mentioned on that occasion that I had been having massage for my hand and arm. "Massage!" he said. "Not a bit of good. Write with a quill pen and you will never be troubled with writer's cramp."

Since that time I have always used a quill pen, and despite the enormous amount of writing I do I have never again been troubled. I have cause to bless the name of Frederick York Powell.

CHAPTER X

FIONA MACLEOD

"PHARAIS" came to me with William Sharp's "Vistas," two slender elegant books from the press of Frank Murray, Derby, in May, 1894. While I greatly admired "Pharais" I found it depressing reading, and even now it seems to have a melancholy association with a rather sad moment of my life. I believe I wept over the reading, and they were tears of depression rather than because the book moved me in any other way. Yet I knew that it was very different matter from "Vistas." I knew that a remarkable personality in literature had appeared. I wish now that I could have approached that first meeting with the high heart and cheerful spirit which are my happy possessions. I find that on May 29, 1894, I received my first letter from Fiona Macleod. Of that letter I can find no trace: it came at a time of illness and sorrow. I must have written about "Pharais" in the *Sketch* or *Illustrated London News*, for which I was doing a deal of work in those days. But on September 24 of the same year I find mention of a second letter. This letter appears in Mrs. William Sharp's Life of her husband, so that it is possible I may have given her both letters, although I can remember nothing about it. I have to acknowledge gratefully Mrs. William Sharp's permission to publish these four letters from William Sharp written over the signature of Fiona Macleod. The second letter runs:—

"Isle of Iona, September, 1894.

"Dear Mrs. Hinkson,—I am, in summer and autumn, so much of a wanderer through the Isles and Western Highlands that letters sometimes are long in reaching me. But your kind note (and enclosure) has duly followed from Edinburgh to Loch Goil in eastern Argyll and thence, deviously, here. It will be a great pleasure to me to read what you have to say in *Illus. London News* or elsewhere, and I thank you. I wish you could be here. Familiar with your poetry as I am, I know how you would rejoice not only in the Iona that is the holy I-Columkill but also in the Iona that is Ithona, the ancient Celtic isle of the Druids. There is a beauty here that no other place has, so unique is it. Of course it does not appeal to all. The Sound of Iona divides the Island from the Wild Ross of Mull by no more than a mile of water; and it is on this eastern side that the village and the ancient Cathedral and ruined Nunnery, etc., stand. Here it is as peaceful as on the West side it is wild and grand. I read your letter last night, at sunset, while I was lying on the Cruac-an-Angeal, the hillock on the West where the angel appeared to St. Columba. To the North lay the dim features of the Outer Hebrides, to the West an unbroken wilderness of waves till they fall against Labrador. To the South, though invisible, the coast-line of Ireland. There was no sound save the deep hollow voice of the sea, and a strange reverberation in a hollow cave underground. It was a very beautiful sight to see the day wane across the ocean, and then to move slowly homeward through the gloaming, and linger awhile by the Street of the Dead, near the ruined Abbey of Columba. But these Isles are so dear to me that I think everyone must feel alike!

"I remain, sincerely yours,
"Fiona Macleod.

"P.S.—I enclose a gilliflower from close to St. Columba's tomb."

I was not yet at all a True Blue Fiona person. I always felt about the early work a sense of mystery which made me uneasy and somewhat antagonistic. In reviewing Mrs. William Sharp's *Lyra Celtica* for the *Speaker* a year or so later I fell foul of a very bad line in a poem which I think did not at all fairly represent Fiona's work. The verse—the third line of which I animadverted upon—ran:—

"Drunk with old wine of love I was,
Drunk as the wild bee in the grass,
Singing his honey-sweet mad bass."

I remember that Lionel Johnson rebuked me, saying it was a mere slip. William Sharp—and his wife for the matter of that—and Fiona were remarkably sweet-tempered. The magnanimity was hard to bear when presently "From the Hills of Dream" arrived with a cordial inscription from Fiona, the offending line taken out.

I had met the Sharps in 1889 at their house in Hampstead when Gertrude Atherton was one of the lions—an elegant young woman in a very smart white frock. She shared her lionship, by the way, with Thomas Hardy. We thought a deal of Mrs. Atherton in the 'nineties. The other day I picked up "The Californians" and marvelled as I read. What was the matter with our critical faculty in the 'nineties? Perhaps our criticism had gone stale. Literature—and criticism—had become too much of a habit. We were always writing about each other—a somewhat ridiculous thing it seems to me now; and we thought we had the critical faculty, looking back contemptuously at a decade or two before, when the critics persuaded people that Sir Lewis Morris and Sir Edwin Arnold were epoch-making poets—a day of real poets too. We wanted clarifying in the 'nineties. Literature was becoming a thing with little relation to Life. The long Peace was dry-rotting us and other things.

From the time of the publication of "From the Hills of Dream" I put behind me the half-dislike I had had up to that time for the work of Fiona Macleod. There were times still when I vaguely disliked and almost feared something or other in Fiona's work. Was it the dual personality? I had the queer feeling with which a dog or a horse detects something that is uncanny.

Now and again I met the Sharps with my dear Meynells, on whose love and friendship I have leant for so many years. I think I met Mrs. Sharp oftener than her husband—for of him I have little impression beyond bigness, blue eyes and a red beard—most un-Fiona-like. Mrs. Sharp was a very agreeable woman with a frank honesty of look and manner. The portrait of her in Sharp's Life does her much less than justice. It was big of her and simple to publish it, for it does her wrong.

Three other letters of Fiona's which I have been able to find I append here.

The first alludes delicately to my unkindness concerning the poem. The second speaks for itself.

"C/o Miss Lilian Rea,
"THE OUTLOOK TOWER,
"THE LAWN MARKET,
"EDINBURGH, 25.8.96.

"My dear Mrs. Hinkson,—My cordial thanks for your most generous and friendly words about my last book—in the *National Observer*, and now again in the *Sketch*. Your words indeed give me singular pleasure. For one thing I am always much more susceptible to praise or blame when the critic is one whose own writings I hold in especial regard—and, as I think I have told you, I delight in your beautiful poetry, and find too in your imaginative prose the same corresponding charm and delicacy of emotion and execution. Let me add here a sentence from a letter from my intimate friend, Mrs. Edith Wingate Rinder, whose forthcoming 'The Shadow of Arvor' (a vol. of Breton legendary romance) will, I am sure, delight you:—'I am delighted with Katharine Tynan's review of "The Washer of the Ford" in the *Sketch*. It is so very sympathetic, and intimately appreciative. Her phrase "The warp and woof of the book are gold and shadow" is peculiarly happy, and the whole article is so free from the commonplaceness of the ordinary review that in itself it is a delight.'

"Though not to be there again till late autumn Mrs. Wingate Rinder lives in London, and I would like you and her to meet some day. When (in October, I expect) my little first volume of verse is published, I shall so gladly send you as the comrade, not as the critic !—a copy.

" Meanwhile, dear Mrs. Hinkson,

" Believe me, cordially yours,
" FIONA MACLEOD."

" C/o Miss Rea,
" THE OUTLOOK TOWER,
" CASTLEHILL,
" EDINBURGH, 3.4.97.

" Dear Mrs. Hinkson,—I have asked my friend Miss Rea, who has now gone to London (and will still, as before, look after my correspondence), to send you some notes 'she took of me' for an American article she has been commissioned to write. These, if I remember aright, will give you the main drift of my possible publicities. For the rest, let me answer briefly that my first encouragers were (first and foremost) Mr. George Meredith—then Mr. Grant Allen, Mr. Traill, and very soon Mr. Yeats and fellow-Celtic writers, including Katharine Tynan Hinkson.

" In great haste,

" Most cordially yours,
" FIONA MACLEOD."

" C/o Miss Rea,
" THE OUTLOOK TOWER,
" CASTLEHILL,
" EDINBURGH, 24.3.97.

" Dear Mrs. Hinkson,—The re-issue of my shorter tales has brought me so many letters : then my present visit to Edinburgh is a brief one ; and, once more very uncertain health has been like a foe knocking at my gates ; for all which trifling reasons I beg you to forgive me for not having sooner acknowledged your kind little note.

" Yes, I *did* see and much appreciate the *Speaker* notice of 'From the Hills of Dream'—though I did not have the added pleasure of knowing it was by yourself. I thank you for it, and all the generous interest you have shown in my work.

" I did not wish to trouble you with all the three volumes of the re-issue set—and moreover wished to make it as a personal offering to a writer whose work has always singular charm for me, and whose generous recognition of my own work has been one of my abiding pleasures. But as you say you intend a little article about me and my work in the *English Illustrated Magazine*, I have directed the publishers to send to you the two companion vols. The third, 'Tragic Romances,' contains my strongest contemporary short story, by common consent (viz., 'Morag of the Glen ')—and what I myself think to be my best, the shorter story called 'The Archer.' Oh, yes, dear Mrs. Hinkson, I am now well aware of much of the mystery that has grown up about my unfortunate self. I have even heard that Fleet Street journalist rumour to which you allude—with the addition that the said unhappy scribe was bald and old and addicted to drink. Heaven knows who and what I am according to some wiseacres. A recent cutting said I was Irish, a Mr. Chas. O'Connor, whom I know not.

"A friend of a friend told that friend that I was Miss Nora Hopper and Mr. Yeats in union—at which I felt flattered but amused. For some time, a year or so ago, there was a rumour that 'Fiona Macleod' was my good friend and relative, William Sharp. Then when this was disproved, I was said to be Mrs. Sharp. Latterly I became the daughter of the late Dr. Norman Macleod. The latest is that I am Miss Maud Gonne—which the paragraphist knows as a fact. Do you know her? She is Irish, and lives in Paris, and is, I hear, very beautiful—so I prefer to be Miss Gonne rather than the Fleet Street journalist!

"Seriously, I am often annoyed by these rumours. But what can I do? There are private reasons as well as my own private wishes, why I must preserve my privacy. I do most urgently wish not to have my privacy made public, partly because I am 'so built' and partly for other reasons; but I would not perhaps let this stand in the way of the urgent wishes of friends, were it not that there are other reasons also. But this much I will confide to you, and gladly: I am *not* an unmarried girl, as commonly supposed. The name I write under is my maiden name. Perhaps I have suffered as well as known much joy in my brief mature life; but what then—all women whose heart is in their brain must inevitably suffer. And so you will, I know, at once excuse me and forgive my inability to give you any material particulars. This past week I have had no fewer than four editorial applications for my photograph for reproduction—but now, as ever, I have had to decline. Two friends in London have my photograph, and perhaps you may see it some day; but now I do not even let friends have a photograph, since one allowed someone to take a sketch of it for an American paper. I can't well explain why I am so *exigeante*. I must leave you to divine from what I have told you. I have looked among my newspaper excerpts for some cuttings of a personal kind, and particularly for a longish account in the *Highland News*—but they are mislaid. I can find only two, which appeared about the time of the publication of 'The Mountain Lovers' a couple of years ago. Perhaps you will kindly let me have them again. There was also a (slightly) personal article on me as a new 'writer' in the *Bookman* for some autumn month in 1895. But, of course, if wished I could give you any information about my books, my work, 'and what I feel about things in general,' as one (would-be) American interviewer puts it. (Of course I don't object to its being known that I come of an old Catholic family, that I am a Macleod, that I was born in the Southern Hebrides, and that my heart still lies where my cradle rocked.) If perchance I should be in London this autumn or early winter —on my way to the Riviera (for I am not strong)—I hope to be able to make your acquaintance in person. I have heard of you from several friends, and particularly from Mr. William Sharp, who is a great admirer of your writings, both in prose and verse. But now I have taken up too much of your time.

"Believe me, dear Mrs. Hinkson,
"Cordially yours,
"Fiona Macleod."

With regard to this last letter Mrs. Sharp writes that "the autobiographical details given in it are fictitious details, which were used by William Sharp more than once in order to prevent the assumption by the recipient of the letter that the writer was William Sharp: that it was his imperative desire from the outset of that phase of his work that the secret of the authorship should be preserved till his death; that through the loyalty of the few friends who knew that he and he alone was Fiona Macleod, and by means of efforts of his own the wish was fulfilled."

I should like to say that I accept these assurances of Mrs. William Sharp's entirely. In my "Twenty-five Years" I expressed some doubt as to the identity of William Sharp with Fiona Macleod, based on a statement of a distinguished Irish poet that William Sharp had told him that he was not Fiona Macleod and that the mystery would some day be cleared up. But that after all was quite in keeping with the whole impersonation. I have no doubt now that William Sharp and Fiona Macleod were one and the same person; and the whole thing remains a profound mystery, for the literary work of William Sharp was on an infinitely lower level—though there are some likenesses—than Fiona's work.

Professor Patrick Geddes and other of William Sharp's friends held the view that it was a case of dual personality, the strange phenomenon which might account for many of the so-called cases of possession and witchcraft in the old days. Upon this point Mrs. Sharp has in the last chapter of her husband's "Life" expressed her views, based on an intimate observation, of this debated question. She does not accept the theory of dual personality as the term is used by psychologists.

Some time in the winter of 1896—7 Miss Rea came to see us. Mrs. Sharp says she was an American friend in the secret. I have always thought that she was a Scotswoman—I have no memory certainly of an accent other than Scottish, but perhaps Miss Rea may have lived long enough in these countries to have lost the American speech. She was a brisk, bright little red-haired lady in my memory of her, quite young; and she must have been an invaluable aid in the play that was being carried on. She laughed with us over the myths concerning Fiona, and had an air as though at any moment she might produce Fiona out of her pocket. I have been told that William Sharp brought Fiona to see George Meredith. No one else that I ever heard of was supposed to have seen Fiona in the flesh, although we seemed always on the edge of it.

There was a great deal of soreness when the truth was revealed. I heard one well-known critic denounce the deception bitterly. A review of his had hurt Fiona, who had written him one of the sweet and gentle letters that always brought one to one's knees. He had sat in sackcloth and ashes because he had hurt this sensitive woman. "And to think," he said, "that I went round for days kicking myself because of William Sharp ! "

I suppose people must have written all sorts of letters to Fiona which they would never have written to William Sharp, and they felt they had been " had." But I dare say it was Fiona who received the letters—Fiona, that Maid of the Mist, soft-eyed, with wild cloudy hair, the spirit which surely had an existence however strangely lodged.

For William Sharp's part in the deception, whatever it was—well, would Fiona ever have been heard if she had written as William Sharp ? I doubt it. Sharp did the one possible thing for that strange, golden discovery of his when he sent it flying on the wings of Fiona Macleod.

CHAPTER XI

1895

THE Great Winter set in on the 28th of December, 1894, and continued almost without a break till Easter. I felt its first fierce wind in my face the 28th of December as I went down Oxford Street on a 'bus with the Meynells. We had been having a day of shopping as in the old good irresponsible days, lunching at Pagani's and going back to Palace Court and Francis Thompson for dinner.

The wind remained north or north-east for more than three months from the beginning of January. It was a hard frost all through, with just enough snow to whiten the ground and give a Christmassy effect. The wind blew prodigiously hard. Its high piping scream became the most familiar of sounds. Mrs. Meynell wrote her poem "The Roaring Frost" after a visit she paid us with Francis Thompson, when lunch, fixed for 1.30, awaited the visitors till 3.30. Mrs. Meynell arrived almost in tears. She never could bear any lack of courtesy. Francis Thompson, she explained, would not get up, although the gayest of little radiant girls had threatened him with the cold water jug. The Brent was of course frozen hard, as was the Thames. They roasted an ox on the river that year. The air was full of the ringing of skates and the screaming of the north wind. In Ireland there was heavy snow. A church in a valley only showed the top of its spire. With the snow there was frost. They could not bury the dead for the depth of snow and the hardness of the ground.

Reading of these things enabled us to bear the incessant screaming of the north wind and the deadly cold since we were free of snow.

The worst of the hard weather began on the 6th of January, 1895. We went to supper with the Frankfort Moores at Kew. There was the usual London cold supper—things in aspic from Harrods', salads, cold fowl, cold sweets. The coldness of death was on everything. Our teeth chattered as we sat about the fire and wondered if there would be snow before morning.

There were a couple of friends of ours and our hosts also there, visitors from Ireland. Frankfort Moore accompanied us to the station. We were story-telling to the last moment. We got into the wrong trains. We went up: they went down. It was Sunday night. By the time we had made our error good in so far as getting to Turnham Green Station we saw the last Ealing train steaming out from the other platform.

A couple who had also missed their connection, with the helpfulness which belongs to the Londoner, volunteered to set us on our way. There was not a vehicle of any kind to be had. Sunday night in the winter of the great cold and London—that part of it at all events—was asleep, or sitting by its hearth fires. There was a yellowish fog, which eclipsed the street lamps and showed every promise of thickening. Nevertheless there was nothing to be done but to set out walking home.

At that time fields, crossed by one or two railway lines, lay between the Uxbridge Road and the Hammersmith Road. Our helpful friends led us up an avenue of a few houses to a level-crossing and left us.

There was a track through the fields from that level-crossing to another, and as we went on the fog thickened. Brickfields were all around us. Here and there a few half-built or newly-built houses, as yet unoccupied, suddenly started up in front of, beside us. Those fields on the edge of London were another matter from innocent country fields. We had heard strange stories of the creatures who sometimes dossed in those empty houses, untroubled by the police. We very much preferred the silence and the thickening fog to the sinister neighbourhood of these places. Of course the fog was no joke. If it thickened sufficiently it might mean our spending our night out—and what a night!

At last, by a wicket-gate, to our immense joy we arrived at a road. Not that we were much better off, for there was no sign of a human habitation. A tall electric light standard showed an orange blur overhead. One of us espied two arms below the blur which looked like sign-posts. He swarmed up the standard, in a way which did credit to his athleticism, and had to sit like a monkey while he lit match after match to read what was on the arms. Alas, it was an instruction that here was to be found a cab-rank for so many cabs.

A vehicle flashed out of a side road and before we could catch it had whirled on its way shouting out an answer to our piteous calls which we could not hear. In sheer desperation we took our random way and blundered along in the fog, till, by a little alley which skirted a big hostelry with stables and farmsteadings attached to it, we came out, to our happy bewilderment, in the Uxbridge Road, not far from Ealing Common Station, at that time still countrified. A crawling cab was subsidised to take us home, where we arrived at 2.30 a.m., having left Turnham Green before midnight. Never were a warm fire and a lit room so sweet.

Ugh! it was a winter! As we tramped round the roads by Perivale the stiff bodies of the birds lay in our path, although there were plenty of farmsteadings for food and shelter. They died of thirst. I remember putting out boiling water for them and it was hard frozen before they could drink it. The water was cut off everywhere because of the danger to the pipes, or perhaps to save it. At certain hours of the day the turncock filled what vessels you chose to bring. If you left water, even a very little, in a vessel, it froze and broke the vessel. A washing-basin not carefully drained had a ring out of it in the morning. Even the soda water froze and broke the bottles. You walked on rivers as on dry land. Where the Brent had overflowed before the frost you saw the grasses entombed as in a crystal block, until the spring should free them.

Some time that autumn Brother Joseph, the Dominican, who had been our friend in Ireland, came to see us. He was the lay-brother who ran, as far as all practical things were concerned, the big Irish novitiate of the Order. He was a famous gardener, as he was many other things. He was highly esteemed by some of the big English florists and nurserymen, and he used to come and pay them visits, a quaint figure doubtless in his white robes—perhaps he went in mufti, though—in those comfortable English houses. He was always greatly interested in his neighbours' gardens, and he used to keep my pretty room at Whitehall supplied with pot roses. I thought at the time that it was a lovely thing to have a growing rose in one's room.

Well, coming to us from Dickson of Chester or Sutton of Reading, or some such person, he brought us a good gift of bulbs and plants. He was not the only one interested in our garden. Jane Barlow's Rose Celeste may still bloom there for all I know, and the beautiful pansies she loved. A portion of Brother Joseph's gift consisted of slips of some very wonderful carnations. They had thriven in the garden up to Christmas. When the cold came the birds ate all the hearts out of them and they perished. We kept our greenhouse going with a lit stove through the worst of the cold. One night of delusive mildness we shirked going down the garden to replenish the stove. Next morning the frost was as hard as ever and all the plants were dead.

Midway of the cold Pat died. It is bad enough when a little dog dies. The very bigness of the creature to be laid away in the frozen earth somehow made the death more intolerable. He had been a skeleton before he died, having several diseases, as is the way with his delicate kind. His poor beautiful ears! He had had nine cysts removed from them. He had learnt the habit of patience under pain. I only had to hold my hand on his head while the cyst was cut out and he bore the knife with just a whimper. The "vet." who attended him was a gentleman, of an old Co. Clare family, no member of which had ever before stooped so low. He had been intended for the Army, but as he spent all his time nursing every sick animal in the neighbourhood his father said contemptuously one day, "Go and be a 'vet.' It's all you are fit for." And he went—to the great advantage of many sick beasts.

He used to insist on having the finest linen in the house—and I had some very fine—to bandage Pat's ear; and he would say "This is a most beautiful dog; his character is perfect." There was something a little disparaging towards us, as though we did not deserve such a dog—as I am sure we did not. When he was called in he was always rather angry with us, as though it was our fault that the dear old dog suffered so much.

It seemed a last cruelty that the cyst recurred when Pat was already very ill. I offered with tears to consent to his happy despatch, if it saved suffering; but Mr. S. thought it unnecessary, since he did not suffer. He used to wander in those last days—the "wandering before death " being upon him—with his head tied up in white linen, frightening people in the dusk by what seemed the ghost of a great dog. He died with a last recognition of us, thumping his great tail even while his eyes were glazing.

It was a disquieting thing—we were nervy in those days—that Codger showed not only grief, but also fear: his behaviour as he passed a dark staircase window on our way upstairs to bed at night made one afraid to look down the garden to where the big grave was, till one had to remind one's self how loving and how magnanimous the dead friend had been. The misery of that memory is somehow a part of the great cold.

Presently the frost broke and there was such a singing of waters, such a sweet smelling of the prisoners, so long held fast in the ice. Oh, the delicious smell of the grass the first day it was free! We had thought that there would be no song-birds, so many had lain stiff in our path, but there was no diminution of song, and the blossom in the gardens again whitened and rosed Ealing as it had done in that other miraculous Spring. There have been no Springs in my experience like those in London, in London suburbs, and none like that Spring after the Great Winter.

Codger, the lively incarnation of youth and adventure, died that Summer. He had taken to wandering after Pat's death. He was the most waggish dog I ever knew, and he found us sadly dull in those days—for we had our sorrows. He used to disappear, and we were miserable till he came home again with an air of boredom at the warmth of our welcome. Obviously he thought us fogeys, and dull at that. We depended on him so much for gaiety that we were very sad in his absence. The time came when he did not return. We were a week without him. It was warm weather and we used to sit in the garden fancying we heard him bark, amid the multitudinous barking of Ealing's dogs. After the week he was found in a horrible prison, miscalled a Dogs' Home; he was on the very eve of execution, because the fool who ran it did not know the difference between the most beautiful of Irish terriers, coated with mud and wild with misery, and a stray mongrel.

We received him back with thankful hearts, but he was not the same. All the old roguish gaiety was gone. The grim little face had no waggishness in it.

He followed his master's bicycle to Harrow and back next day. On the way he was so exhausted that he had to be given a rest and a drink of water at a cottage. The next day his friend, the "vet.", was called in. "Wouldn't it be a sad thing now if you only found him to lose him again?" he asked, with that look as though he arraigned some Power for the things animals must suffer. As for us, he never thought us worthy of our dogs and did not trouble to let us down easily. "He'd have been a lovely one for the show-bench," he said, as he went away. It was the most virulent form of distemper I have ever seen, contracted at that horrible Dogs' Home. He was dead in a few days.

I dropped slow tears for days together. We could not endure the sight of his collar and his water-trough. We experienced in those days the real kindness of the English people and their kind simple love of animals. The neighbours came to say how sorry they were, as though there had been a death in the family, as indeed there had been. We were dogless, and only the real lover of dogs knows how sad a state that is.

The Lady Next Door was kindest of all. He had plagued her as I had plagued her. He had assisted at household functions in her garden, swinging gaily from her *lingerie* as it hung on the lines—we were so countrified that no one objected to the neighbours' washing hung out to dry. He used to assist in shaking the mats. He would bring us in treasure-trove in a way he had, an embarrassing way, of bringing home a large quacking duck or a lady's feather boa, with honest pride. Once he brought in the next-door dog's collar and laid it on the hearthrug. I had introduced lawless Irish ways before the Irish dog came. I used to say that it was a dispensation of Providence that since we had no early plums our neighbours on the other side had, and they all fell into our garden. The Lady Next Door had also a plum tree overhanging our garden. I used to eat her plums. She thought to keep me in honest ways by presenting me with the overhanging branch. "Mrs. S.'s love to Mrs. Hinkson," so ran the message; "and she will be so pleased if Mrs. Hinkson will accept the plums on the branch of Mrs. S.'s tree which overhangs Mrs. Hinkson's garden." Mrs. Hinkson did—she had already accepted: then—I blush to recall it—she put out a marauding Irish hand and seized other plums within reach.

The Lady Next Door forgave in this hour of grief. I can see her wiping away a tear as we sat on the grass plot in the lonely garden with very little heart to talk. The garden had been the scene of so many of his pranks. There were the American poets, husband and wife, to whom we had lent the house a year earlier. The lady was timorous, loving dogs but not being quite sure of them. She was a subject for Codger's pranks. He would abstract all her belongings and carry them one by one to the end of the garden, even over the low wall into the kitchen-garden of the big house at the end of the road, and the fields beyond. Dora Sigerson, who stayed with the poets, Mr. and Mrs. Piatt, that summer, would hear the saddest wail. "Dora, Dora, Codger has taken my

slippers"—or book, or skirt or anything else. "He growls so when I go after him. I'm afraid he doesn't like me." He never took anyone else's belongings in the same way.

That was another miraculous Summer after the Great Winter. I remember the garden, when I got about again after the birth and death of my second little son, in a haze of scintillating heat, with the Victoria plum trees shining through it like so many burning bushes. There were immense dews that autumn, when every grass blade was an "old man's beard," when the world was drenched and smoking through the September weather, and myriads of "daddy long-legs" came in from the fields and choked all our lamps.

But Summer was over when we got away to Ireland for the change that should enable us to go on living again. We locked up the little house and went—it was always so easy to go in those days, when a few pounds opened the gate of the world to us, when there was only one maid to be sent away for a holiday or permanently. Once six guineas for a story sent us off joyfully on our travels. We used to leave the house in charge of the policeman till it was time for Mrs. Hale to come and clean up for our return. We had a friend in Ealing who was our guardian angel in those days. Human nature is so happily constituted that the fact of helplessness produces the guardian angel. It was a matter of honour with two or three good people that our paths should be made as smooth as they could make them.

We went away heavily that autumn. We came back in six weeks' time, on a frosty winter morning—we used to travel by night and arrive at Willesden about 6 o'clock in the morning, driving home from Willesden to Ealing—to a spotless little house with bright fires everywhere and the breakfast bacon sizzling in the pan. There was only one room closed and with the blinds down. I went in and drew the blinds and opened the windows. Life had begun again.

We brought among our belongings a bird in a cage—a little greenish canary—from the aviary in a corner of Jane Barlow's house, sheltered by the thatch, where the hardy little birds lived all the year through. There was something that moved in the basket which I carried and deposited on the kitchen-table. "Why, if it isn't a puppy!" cried Mrs. Hale. It was Paudeen. Many a journey Paudeen made in our company after that, many an hour he cheered. It was a sign of what the change had done for us that on the way over we wrote, after our own names in the passengers' book of the express boat, "P. Longtail, J.P., Sir Richard Bird." The joke succeeded beyond our expectations, for, when we read the list in the *Irish Times* a day or two later, we found that we being commoners had been placed low down in the printed list, while Sir Richard Bird figured among the baronets, and P. Longtail, J.P., among those who had an honour.

Paudeen certainly kept our hearts uplifted. With his coming the sadness and sickliness which lay over some of those days disappeared. I have described him in an earlier page. He was so small, and so quaint, and so wise that the dog-loving English people were always for embracing him. In the midst of the Perivale fields, where there is or was a wicket-gate, one day a whole girls' school—darling, fat, peach-skinned little girls with shining locks—knelt down and worshipped him. He bore these attentions with a weary tolerance. It was the time of a muzzling order, and he wore a large wire muzzle like a cage on his head. Humorous old gentlemen used to make a feint of snatching his muzzle. In time he grew to love it, since it betokened a walk.

When he added a coat to the muzzle it completed his oddity. From his poodle-mother he had the trick of leaping, describing a parabola in the air, a perfectly graceful arch which suggested flying rather than anything of effort. He leaped every gutter, making this beautiful arch. The simple English dogs wondered and admired.

Lionel Johnson loved Paudeen dearly. There was a certain likeness between the two small, wistful, wise faces. And Paudeen was literary. In his puppy days, when he must tear up, he tore very gently the contents of the waste-paper basket ; and once, in Ireland, he stole a bundle of goose-quills and laid them at my feet. We used to come home from our walks to find Lionel Johnson with Paudeen in his arms. He was always begging for Paudeen, as were other people, but we could not give him up. In later life he developed many vices. His bullying of bigger dogs, who conceded that his intellect made up for his size, was disgraceful. Yet he was always dearly loved.

We used to say that Paudeen attracted Lionel Johnson at least as much as we did. At that time he was with us pretty constantly. There was a splendid December that year, 1895, right up to Christmas Eve night. There was bright, frozen snow, and the trees were like silver chandeliers ; we anticipated a delightful walk across the fields to Hanwell for the Midnight Mass. The Ealing Catholic Mission was by this time in the charge of the Rev. Richard O'Halloran, and I had been going far afield to Hanwell.

Lionel adored everything in the way of ritual and ceremonial. He arrived in the afternoon of Christmas Eve, carrying a huge bag. It was out of all proportion to his fragility, and one wondered how he could have carried it from the station up to Mount Avenue, as he had done, not seeming to feel the burden. As a matter of fact it contained very little beyond an immense rosary, such as you may see at a monk's girdle or in the hands of an Irish peasant.

We had so looked forward to the mediævalism of trudging across the frozen snow, through the unchanged fields to the Midnight Mass, at an hour when the world slept and only we and the angels were awake, with Kings and Shepherds and the kneeling beasts.

Alas ! as we sat at dinner we heard the dripping thaw. Then came on sleet and wet snow. But we were not to be baulked of our expedition. We sent for a growler and off we went, arriving a few minutes before the church door was opened.

There was a very small congregation that night to welcome in the Holy Birth. Of course it was a dreadful night, snowing faster as time went on and freezing over the thaw. We took an empty front seat, and Lionel began to say his rosary, half-aloud, the rattle of the great beads as they fell through his fingers sounding like a shower of big hailstones. Presently we were aware of a large and evidently indignant lady staring at us. Obviously it was her pew, and we had trespassed on her rights and privileges. She said nothing, but she suggested eloquently a pointed finger and the word " Go ! " We went ; but Lionel's attention was not to be attracted or distracted. There was abundant room for the lady, ample as she was, and six Lionels ; nevertheless I have no doubt she suffered from a sense of injury. Lionel only made the amazed discovery that we were not beside him when the congregation began to leave the church.

We went home walking along the middle of the Uxbridge Road, with the blue arc lamps making a long avenue of moons in front of us. It was intensely cold and very slippery. At that hour there were really only ourselves and the singing stars, and the Shepherds and Kings and the kneeling beasts, and perhaps a policeman. I do not know what Lionel was talking about, but he talked eagerly into my ear, while the other one of the party strode ahead, thinking of the fireside and the lit supper table and the delights of home to the weary man.

Lionel could spend a whole evening at a house without speaking. We had been warned before we knew him of his disconcerting and amazing capacity for silence. We never had experience of it. He was in my knowledge of him only saved from being an intemperate talker (in the Stevensonian phrase) by the grave politeness which would let another have his say.

On Christmas morning, long after I was a-bed, Lionel and my other half discussed classical matters ; and the talk went on in this way for several days after Christmas.

That Christmas night we dined with the Meynells ; I remember only the homeward journey, when, in the carriage from Paddington, there was a party returning from a family party, the members of which discussed the entertainment and the relatives with the characteristic lack of reserve of the English people. Apparently the good things they had eaten and drunken were but a preliminary to the supper awaiting them. Father had to ask mother for a list of the courses—sausages, cold roast pork, a tasty bit of toasted cheese, pickles, plum pudding ; over each he smacked his lips in a way which Lionel enjoyed hugely. He would have said " Not 'arf ! " but that bit of expressive Cockney slang was yet years ahead. The criticisms of the family connections were surprisingly frank, especially of someone called Alf who had married 'Liza's daughter, Emily Jane. A long discussion of the reason why they couldn't abear Alf ended in the summing up that he was one of " them there Gay Foxes."

I gave a *verbatim* report of this Dickensian conversation in the *Westminster* a day or two later. Some of my friends were scandalised. One said that he could not think of it and my poetry without being hurt.

CHAPTER XII

1896

The year 1896 was a cheerful one. On the edge of it I reached the summit of my hopes in those days. I got an "Autolycus" column in the *Pall Mall*. This was not only agreeable from the point of view of the regular income, but because it was good to please an editor whose judgment one respected. He was reported to be very exacting about the "Autolycus." The lady who made room for me—a well-known novelist—went because she had "queered his pitch"—a quite satisfactory reason, so far as he was concerned.

Mr. Cust expressed himself as pleased with my articles and I was much gratified. I remember how I went to the Meynells on the Sunday—we seem to have supped with those dearest of friends most Sundays of the year—unable to keep the beam of joy from my face, panting to tell my news. As we were leaving Wilfred Meynell said to me in the hall, "Well, good-night, dear Madame Autolycus." Clement Shorter, who was getting into his overcoat, pricked up his ears to hear the news. He was a very good employer in those days, but he had sometimes a withering way with him. He offered his congratulations with a little laugh. "I hope it will last," he said, as he went out of the house by the deep porch where the policeman on duty used to sleep of a wet night and fill the house with his snoring.

A few weeks later Mr. Cust left the *Pall Mall Gazette*. We were all prodigiously excited over it. We were quite sure we should never find such an editor again; and indeed we never did. Other editors were dull after Mr. Cust. The immediate cause of his going was reputed to be his leading article on some American grievance against Great Britain. America had been "holding us to strict accountability," and the *Pall Mall* came out with a leader, "Fee-Faw-Fum!" and followed it by one "Drink to Me, Olney, with Thine Eyes"—Mr. Olney being the American Secretary of State. The American proprietor, whom I used to call the Golden Astor (in those days of the vogue of "The Yellow Aster") was very angry. This little jest of mine, by the way, vastly pleased Clement Shorter, as did another, when the *Sketch* had paid me for an article on that delightful American poetess, Louise Imogen Guiney, putting down her name as Miss Ginney. "Fortunately," I said, "she was Miss Two-Guinea to me." A small jest, but the editor liked it.

Mr. Cust's resignation or deposition was worse than a Cabinet crisis to our circle. The most exciting rumours were about concerning the circumstances. Most of the brilliant staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette* went out with its editor.

We all wrote dutiful letters of sympathy and regret to Mr. Cust. Here is his reply:—

> "Dear Mrs. Hinkson,—Very many thanks for your kind words. The catastrophe is disgusting, but saved by humour. I trust that our happy relations are not all over yet.
>
> "Yours sincerely,
> "HARRY CUST."

This we thought a very characteristic epistle, and it was none the less so that Mr. Cust had written in exactly similar terms to all his "Autolycus" ladies; but that knowledge came later. Doubtless the thing could not have been better said.

Well, the great days were done with, and gaiety was sadly eclipsed in the world—in our world. What the

Pall Mall had meant to us in days of depression! How its arrival had been eagerly looked for! On one of the saddest days of my life I remember laughing till I cried over an article in the *Pall Mall*. For years afterwards we used to talk of Mr. Cust coming back as people talk of the legendary heroes who lie asleep waiting for the word which is to set the world going again. Alas, he never came back. The rumour was very insistent just before the Jameson Raid that he was to edit a new paper in which some of the South African magnates were interested; but it came to nothing—perhaps because of the Raid and the War.

Sir Douglas Straight succeeded Mr. Cust and remained for several years editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. During his editorship practically all I wrote for the paper went in. He dropped the "Autolycus" after his first year, but I had so much work on the paper that I never missed it.

I usually took for my "Autolycus" articles subjects from life. They were often about people and happenings at my hand. One Sunday morning there was a prodigious stir in the Avenue. A wealthy and eccentric old lady, living alone except for the gardener and his wife, who came and went, ran from her house into the road calling out that there were burglars in the house, that she had surprised them and turned the key of a bedroom door upon them. There was only one man in the Avenue. This excitement happened at the breakfast hour. All the women in the Avenue went in a procession to the house, the intrepid man leading them. The old lady, with a shaking finger, indicated the room, which looked very harmless from the outside with its Nottingham lace curtains and brass-rodded *brise-bise*. The One Man walked boldly into the house and up the stairs—a train of admiring women following at his heels. At the locked door he paused. We were all expectation, and—in those pre-Suffrage days—ready to turn tail. He cleared his throat. His hand was upon the key. Then he turned round and said firmly: "This is a matter for the police. I shall not open that door till the police are here and I can feel I am acting legally."

There were no burglars. It was only what my small boy used to call "an imagination" when he was accused of telling a lie.

I made my week's "Autolycus" of it, depending on the neighbours reading another evening paper rather than the sprightly *Pall Mall.* The next "Autolycus" was also concerned with our Avenue. The Lady Next Door had her grievances—beyond Codger. When she remarked over the wall that she was a lonely widow and she did not know if the Law would protect her, we looked out for squalls. Once when we thought of putting up a little greenhouse she asked us if we had ever heard of "Ancient Lights." She always had several male hats and coats hanging in her hall to frighten off possible burglars.

I mentioned some of these things in the "Autolycus." I told the tale of a visit I had paid next door, when the burden of complaint had been of one of our chimneys which smoked into the next door drawing-room. "Indeed," she said, "I have reason to hate that chimney. But for it I might not now be a widow and unprotected. My dear husband was driven into the verandah one chilly evening by the smoke from *your* chimney. He contracted a chill. Within a week he was dead."

I felt properly conscience-stricken and said all I could of regret on my own part and the chimney's. But, a few days later, I came upon the family tomb and monument at Perivale. The Gentleman Next Door had lived to his ninety-fourth year.

All this went into the "Autolycus." After that had happened I lived in dread and terror. For several days

I did not meet anyone of the Family Next Door. As they went to and fro I used to peep at them from behind my window curtain, wondering if they *knew*. I was a sad coward in those days—made so doubtless by the unpleasantness of my Irish friends and neighbours when they were written about. At last I could bear the suspense no longer. Someone had sent me a tin of shortbread, which I dislike. Here was the occasion to "dare to put it to the touch." I sent the shortbread next door, saying to myself, "If they know they will return it; if they do not return it all is well." It was not returned, but no acknowledgment came for a day, in which I had time to imagine many things. The second afternoon in came the Family Next Door to thank me for the shortbread. They were overwhelmingly friendly. Said the Lady Next Door, "But how delightful you were in the *Pall Mall Gazette* about Mr. A. We *did* laugh." Not a word about the "Autolycus," in which she was intimately concerned.

That "Autolycus" was in the nature of a perpetual prank. Once a youth who was coaching for the Army spent a summer afternoon reposing on the grass at my feet, playing with Paudeen. I do not know why he did it. It was as incredible that I could be interesting to him as that he could be interesting to me. He bore a French name, and perhaps *les petit soins* came more easily to him than to a Britisher of the same age. I bade him be silent till tea-time while I wrote. It was all about him and his visit. It was one of my most successful articles. People were divided as to whether it was not my most humorous "Autolycus." More, he liked it when he read it, was even flattered. I should have made the young Britisher my enemy for life.

Again it was my servants. I did a little set of "Autolycus" articles on my servants. I had had some queer specimens. I remember writing of one while she stood by my desk receiving the day's orders. At least the ink was wet on the page that described her. I was afraid her eye might fall on it, but perhaps after all I need not have feared. To the uninitiated my handwriting is always a stumbling block.

It was a good summer. Many people found their way to see us. One Sunday it was Stephen Phillips, with Lionel Johnson who came most Sundays and many week-days. Stephen Phillips was melancholy. He was working at an Army coach's down Blackheath way and did not like the work. Another Sunday we had Bliss Carmen, the Canadian poet, and a man named Ransom, with Lionel Johnson and others. Bliss Carmen wore a wide picturesque hat which he laid negligently on the grass, and Mr. Ransom sat on it while discoursing eloquently on Dowson's poetry. I was laughing too much to be able to draw his attention to what he was doing. We saw a good deal of Stephen Phillips then and afterwards.

Ealing was in the full beauty of June when we left it for a Crescent at Notting Hill. The men who moved us expressed amazement at our leaving the green sweet rosy place for the dust and glare of London in a very hot June. We did it really to be near the Meynells. We had had so much sadness in the pretty house that even now I think we were well advised to leave it. I can remember our last walk by the Reservoir on Hanger Hill and the primrose evening light in the water.

> " A wain of hay came up the lane.
> O fields I shall not walk again
> And trees I shall not see, so still
> Against a sky of daffodil!
>
> " Fields where my happy heart had rest
> And where my heart was heaviest,
> I shall remember you at peace,
> Drenched in moon-silver like a fleece.

"The little water sweet and cold,
The moon of silver and of gold.
The dew upon the grey grass-spears:
I shall remember them with tears."

There were many reasons why we should leave the little house, but I shall not talk of them. After I had left it the thought of the empty rooms used to come back to me of moonlight nights as though a child cried at being left alone. One of my fanciful sorrows was for the dogs who could not rise up and follow us.

It was a very hot day when I turned my back on the Laurels, under its splendid chestnut tree, in the hands of the removers, who, after their manner, were leaving our shabbiest articles of furniture exposed to the gaze of the passers-by, while they hid our pretty things in the depths of the "pan." My invaluable Mrs. Hale accompanied me on that flight. We left our late cook sitting in the little kitchen, receiving *largesse* from Notting Hill tradespeople's touts, who fondly believed her still in the employ. She was one of those who had figured in the "Autolycus" series.

As usual the "pan." and the van were to follow closely on our footsteps. There would barely be time for us to arrive first. As usual we waited many hours in the empty house, where there was nothing to sit upon but the stairs. We were to have dined with the Meynells, but, during the period of waiting, we became so mysteriously dirty, with no chance of ablutions, that we were obliged to cancel the engagement. Paudeen sat on one of the marble chimney-pieces while the "pan." and the van disgorged their contents. By the way, I believe there was only a "pan." and a cart. Our worldly goods were not many in those days.

Poor Paudeen! I can see his little wistful face and the wagging tail and uplifted paw which protested that even with the thermometer at 80° a marble mantelpiece was a cold seat. He was there for safety while the house stood open. Mrs. Hale had seen to it that one of the first articles extracted from the "pan." was my armchair. There I sat enthroned through the beautiful evening, receiving a never-ceasing train of tradespeople, who besought my custom. I was very tired, and it seemed the easiest way to give the custom to everyone and leave Mrs. Hale to disentangle it. She was disentangling it for months. I used to hear her say. "There! I never did! Mrs. 'Inkson give you 'er custom. That there, my man, is a downright lie." A butcher named Mace (that wasn't his name) called, I believe, at intervals during our four years' tenancy. I distinctly remember giving him the custom. Mrs. Hale had no words for his brazenness.

Despite the carking memory of the little house standing alone, the moonlight pouring into its empty rooms, we quite enjoyed the Crescent at first. It was so nice and easy to walk round to the Meynells at Palace Court. I remember that Wilfred Meynell objected humorously to the Crescent's postal district being W. It was not our fault. He said it ought to be "Near the Clarendon," which was the nearest "pub." We played a joke on John Lane by telling him that you could not find Palace Court without adding Ossington Street, that being the humble street at the back of Palace Court. John Lane assured us solemnly that Palace Court, W., was a quite sufficient address.

It was so nice and easy for people to come to see us. And the Crescent garden in those hot nights was lit by the inhabitants with Japanese lanterns, while people sat and smoked cigarettes and drank coffee under the trees. There were beautiful trees in the Crescent garden, some of them no doubt there long before there was a Crescent;

and there were bushes of pink May and lilac and laburnum and syringa and many other flowering kinds. We had selected the Crescent because, coming that way by chance one day, we had seen through the unshuttered windows of our empty house a glimpse of trees in their first tender green.

We had a little garden of our own to which we descended by steep steps from the drawing-room windows. We used to sit there in the hot nights, after dinner, with our guests, seeing the lights and hearing the voices beyond, and agree that it was quite foreign. It was: it was mainly Oriental; but that we did not know as yet. When we did know it was worth while to look at the brilliance of the very young Jewesses, as they went to and fro, clothed upon with scarlet and amber. It was a lasting delight to leave your house by the garden way and to enter it, instead of by the hall-door steps and the pavements.

The verandah next door to us was fitted up in the most wonderful manner, covered over, hung with curtains, furnished with couches and easy chairs, adorned as gaily as a house-boat with flowers. We could catch glimpses of a very handsome woman, no longer young, reclining on a couch in the verandah. She took her afternoon drives with as much circumstance as though she were a very great lady indeed. Cushions, hot-water bottles, rugs, sun-shades. It took three maids and the coachman to get her installed, and a crowd of curious passers-by gathered to see her go.

She had a curious elegance. We knew later that the house in the Crescent was her own: that it had come to be hers long before the dry rot seized on the Crescent and went climbing up the hill, rotting crescents and gardens till it reached the Square at the top of splendid eighteenth-century houses. A great many old ladies used to come to the little gate of her garden to pay her homage. We used to hear their small timid voices : " Chattie, dear ! " (our neighbour's name was Charlotte). " Chattie, dear! " If the Queen of the Crescent, as we called her, was not graciously inclined the " Chattie, dear " would remain unanswered, till finally it would end on a note of despair, and the little old lady would creep away sadly.

All these things interested us very much. The morning after our arrival Paudeen brought in a long train of the Crescent dogs, headed by a very large fat old pug with protruding eyes, whom we at once named the Colonel. It was rather a delirious time for Paudeen, since, for the first time, he received the homage due to his intellectual superiority. It was good to see him teaching his new friends a game of flight and pursuit at which he was very proficient, more than making up for his lack of speed by his skill in twisting and turning. It was *his* game. The stolid English dogs (or shall we say " solid "?) accepted their initiation into the game with obvious surprise and pleasure ; but alas ! the cardinal principle of the game, according to the inventor, was that he should always be the hare, the rest of the pack the hounds. He had his first disillusionment when they selected other hares and knocked him over in the excitement of the chase. His yells of indignation as he followed at the heel of the hunt were pitiful. He was an anxiety, too, in the matter of dog-fights, for the Irish terrier in him always brought him into the thick of the fight and the poodle in him had no stomach for it.

We just settled into the Crescent and then went off to Ireland. Indeed, if the Irish visit had not been impending we might never have gone to the Crescent at all—since in those irresponsible days one could always have a change to Ireland at any moment one had a fancy for it.

I can remember how the streets looked that morning as we drove from Notting Hill to Euston. The journey in those days meant an early departure, and it was delicious to be going off just about the time that London began to wake up. It was a sultry summer morning with a haze of heat in the streets. Those settings-out for Ireland—how good they were! Real bits of joy and glamour in the English life; for the way with Ireland is that no sooner do you get away from her than the golden mists begin to close about her, and she lies, an Island of the Blest, something enchanted in your dreams. When you come back you may think you are disillusioned, but you know well that the fairy mists will begin to gather about her once more.

Usually we left London in fine weather and ran into rain as soon as we got to Wales. On that day in 1896 the sun shone all day from a coppery haze. It was always so good to get to the estuary of the Dee when one had passed Chester, and then the sea and the mountains—something to be dreamt of after a torrid London.

We woke the morning after arrival to the soft patter of the Irish rain. How we revelled in the sound! How we hurried to get up and out into it. It was heavenly after the long weeks of unwinking sun.

It was mid-July—St. Swithin—a fatal time in the annals of Irish weather. The soft patter changed to a downpour. The gutters ran. The water-pipes gurgled. We thought it the music of Heaven. The rain lasted that year well into October. We had time to get used to the music.

My husband had come over with a serious intention of writing a book on "Cycling in Ireland." He waited through July and August for the rain to leave off. Everyone said that September would bring the fine weather. September was always the finest month of the year in Ireland—"The Poor Man's Harvest," and so on.

It rained still in mid-September, when, in despair, he started on his cycling tour. There was not a day that he was not drenched to the skin. He sat one day on a wet stone in his waterproof cape, the country around him hidden in rain, and an old man came by and said to him compassionately: "If I was you I'd go home and get under shelter."

He had adventures. He spent a day or two at Mount Melleray Abbey of the Trappists, where was perpetual silence and his eyes opened of mornings to the handwriting on the wall: "Remember! God sees you. Remember! Death! Judgment! Hell! Heaven! Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!" These inscriptions proved neither sedative nor stimulating. Now and again a Trappist would open the door in the dead waste and middle of the night to look at him, departing again silently.

A lay-brother who was allowed to speak said to him: "Is Miss Braddon alive yet?" He replied that she was. "Ah, well," said the lay-brother. "There is one of the brothers here who would like to know that. When he was in the world he read a beautiful book by her called 'Henry Dunbar.'"

A nun of the Poor Clares wrote to me the other day: "I was so glad to learn from the article you sent me that Kipling is still writing. When I was in the world I read everything he wrote, from "Plain Tales from the Hills" onward, till I became a Poor Clare."

After we returned to London I wrote a full, true, and particular account of my husband's experiences at Mount Melleray, as though they were my own. I, of course, took care not to sign it, since no woman ever crosses the threshold of a Trappist monastery, the feminine visitor being accommodated at a guest-house without the walls.

To my horror the *Pall Mall* put in the articie as a "follower," placing my name in full at the head of it. I waited for consequences, but none ensued. Doubtless the Trappists never see newspapers, and no one else thought it necessary to point out that a woman could not have been admitted to the intimacies of a Trappist monastery, as I had represented myself.

After my poor man had been on this wet and wind-blown pilgrimage for nearly three weeks I went down to Killarney to retrieve him. It was the very last day of September, and there had been a great storm the night before my journey—indeed, it was still blowing great guns, and there was hardly a yellowing leaf left on the trees as I drove from Whitehall to Kingsbridge. My brother-in-law, John O'Mahony, to whom I shall devote the next chapter, came to see me off and sent a telegram to Killarney to say that I had started. He was a great joy to us in those days. When I wanted a subject for an article or a story I had only to ask him: as for traditions, he could always make traditions. John O'Mahony had smoothed the path of the half-drowned traveller by providing him with a friend in every town. If he did not know people in any town he knew *of* people, and his letters of introduction were never questioned.

My train was held up at Portarlington for two hours, waiting for the mail, which was late because of the storm, to catch us up. When we arrived at Mallow the Killarney Express had gone without us. We *were*, by the way, the Killarney Express; but, as John O'Leary used to say, "That's neither here nor there." Something had gone without us. We had failed to make the connection, and when the truncated or caudated train arrived at Killarney no one said anything about the delay of the express, to the great alarm of those who were expecting an arrival by the train. I, meanwhile, had been informed at Mallow that I could not get on to Killarney till about 9 o'clock that night—it was then about 3 p.m. I was going off to send a telegram to Killarney when a porter ran after me.

" You're in the greatest of luck," he said, " for here's a Cork Excursion to Killarney that no man knew a word about just comin' into the station. Here—in wid ye ! "

I was hustled into the train and arrived at Killarney about 5, to find that not even the stationmaster was aware that the Killarney Express from Dublin had not arrived at all.

We were back in London by the end of October and seeing a good deal of the makers of poetry and the producers—Lionel Johnson always, Stephen Phillips, the Meynells, the Shorters, among others. Once there was a little Sunday party to which Laurence Binyon came, accompanying his cousin Stephen Phillips. But it was a clouded end of the year because of the illness of one of us, and we began to feel the sickliness of life in a decaying part of London when one is working, with neither time nor money for the London gaieties.

CHAPTER XIII

JOHN O'MAHONY

During those visits of ours to Ireland a great part of our gaiety and our happiness depended on John O'Mahony, who married a younger sister of mine in 1895. He was a young Cork man, a barrister, and doing brilliantly in his profession when he died untimely in 1904. He lived every hour of his day, and made others live theirs while he was with them. It was a world in which gaiety was eclipsed when he went.

We used to say that Stevenson should have known him to give him immortality in a book. He was a true Stevenson character. Indeed, in a manner of speaking, he was a brother of Stevenson.

> "Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck."

The sextet might have been written of him down to the

> "And something of the Shorter Catechist,"

for he was oddly, sincerely pious, and one never could be sure of the moment when he might not read you a sudden homily, although his wildness drove a coach and four through at least the conventional laws. Wild—he was wild; as wild as the wind that comes over the mountains, and, like that, sparkling and full of refreshment. He had the wild, dark eye of an Arab horse, an eye that in houses and amid towns meditated flight. You had a note of warning when, suddenly furtive, his eye turned on you, that at any moment he might be off like the wind.

He loved the wild ones of the world like himself. I really think in his heart of hearts he had rather be a jolly tramp than the brilliant and successful lawyer Fate forced him to be. Yes, Fate forced her gifts on him—made him successful; more, made him hard-working: gave him the instant audience his soul loved: gave him a season or two of success rapid beyond men's experience—the excitement, the applause, the laughter which wore out his eager heart.

I believe if he had lived in the eighteenth century he would have chosen to be a highwayman—one like his favourite hero "Bold Brennan of the Moor," who was also an outlaw for his country's sake, and robbed the rich to give to the poor. I can hear him now coming home at night trolling a verse of the ballad by which Brennan is enshrined for ever in the hearts of the country people. Everyone loved him and would fain hold him of their company, and he was not one to break away from friendly detaining hands. The night might be wild and wet, cold and snowing—as it might be balmy and set with stars. To him all weather came alike. He was initiate with the things of Nature, and the wind and the rain were his brothers. You would hear him a long way off trolling his song. It might be "The White Cockade," as it often was:—

"King Charles is King James's son,
And from a royal race is sprung:
Then up with the shout and out with the blade,
And viva la! the White Cockade."

Or it might be "Brennan on the Moor":—

"'Tis of a gallant highwayman
A story I will tell.
His name was Billy Brennan,
In Ireland he did dwell.

All on the Kilworth Mountain
He runned his wild career
And many a goodly gentleman
Before him shook with fear.

CHORUS:
"Brennan on the Moor, boys,
Brennan on the Moor.
Bold and undaunted stood
Young Brennan on the Moor.

"One day as Billy Brennan
From the mountains came down,
He met the Mayor of Limerick
One mile outside the town.
The Mayor, he knew his features.
'Young man I think,' says he,
'Your name is Willy Brennan:
You must come along with me.'

"Now Brennan's wife had gone to town
Provisions for to buy,
And when she saw her Willy dear
She began to wail and cry.
'Give me,' says he, 'that tenpenny.'
And as the words he spoke
She handed him a blunderbuss
From underneath her cloak.

"Now Brennan with that blunderbuss
A tale he did unfold.
He made the Mayor of Limerick
To yield him up his gold.
Five hundred pounds in silver
He took from off him there
And with his horse and saddle
To the mountains did repair."

And so on in the interminable history of him who, like Robin Hood,

"A brace of loaded pistols
He carried night and day.
He never robbed a poor man
Upon the King's highway.
But what he took from off the rich,
Like Turpin and Black Bess,
He did divide it to assist
Poor widows in distress."

Or it might be a "Come-all-ye," describing the latest execution, sung in the fairs and sold as a broadsheet by the ballad-singers. He would come in possibly—nay, rather oftener than not—soaked through in that land of mild, perpetual rain, but at peace with the elements and all the world. And, seeing his dear face, you forgave him straightway the dinner that waited in vain, the long evening of expectation, with the blank of his absence like a sore at the heart of it, the late hour, the broken slumber. Always he was worth waiting for, even into the small hours. He might have set your orderly life all askew. But here he was at last, loving and giving, carrying very often material gifts, always bubbling over with jests and stories, ready to sit down and unpack the budget of delightful things, although he was wet through and you were in a dressing-gown and conscious of the extinguished fire. He would button-hole you to your bedroom door with the stories which were to colour your dreams with the gold of laughter. And of course everything was forgiven. You had but to lay eyes on him to forgive him.

His humour was usually humane. Occasionally it was impish, elfish, a marsh-fire which those it played over forgot as soon as it had fled elsewhere. At its most mischievous it left no scar. You laughed with him when he was merry at your expense. There was never the rancour behind the jibes that desired to push the point home. There was something impersonal, aloof, in his quips and cranks. Among the most touchy people in the world he was a chartered mocker.

I have said he was wild, wild as the west wind that's mild and kind. Little hands one did not see plucked at him, little voices one did not hear, voices of the winds and the waters, were incessantly calling him out from civilisation to leave the dull world behind and come out and be free.

Once it was a brook singing over its golden bed, brown as amber, yellow gold in its high lights. We leant over a bridge on the country road looking down into its depths. He glanced back at the mountains from which it came, and there was an ache of longing in his voice.

"I never saw a little stream yet," he said, "that I didn't want to track it to its source. It'll have bubbled up, maybe, between the fronds of a hart's tongue fern and made a little pool. And, then maybe, it slipped over a rock and fell in a golden fringe. Do you remember the streams at Killarney falling over the rocks that edge the roads? And after that it'll have made a channel for itself, and gone singing down the dark glens and foaming about the boulders. It's a trout-stream. If you watched long enough up there you'd see the fin of a trout where he was skulking in the pools. I wonder at all how the first trout came in it." Then he was moved to tell me the story of the Molaga trout. He was full of folk-lore, and ever ready to impart it. His knowledge made the very stories live.

"Did you ever hear of St. Molaga? It was he brought the honey bees into Ireland. There is a well he blessed in the Co. Cork. There was a little silver trout used to swim round and round in it, and he too was blessed and was called St. Molaga's trout. The waters possessed the power of healing, but it was unlawful to use it for any culinary purpose, and it couldn't be got to boil. To this day they say in the Co. Cork, if a kettle is long a-boiling: 'It must have St. Molaga's trout in it.'"

I got him to write a delicious piece of folk-lore, "The Trencherman and the Molaga Trout," which appeared in the *Speaker*. It was to have been the first of many. He was in love with the idea of making a book of these stories, racy and delightfully humorous and simple, gathered from the lips of the old peasants with whom he found it so easy to make friends.

"I'd like it to appear in America," he said, "I'd *love* to think of the old people reading it that emigrated out there."

But the book never got further than the second story, which also appeared in the *Speaker*, I think. He was no great one for making books. He desired the instant audience of the eyes and the lips and the throats that looked and smiled and roared their applause at him.

That day at the brook-side he turned away as one who shoulders his burden again regretfully. "I ought to have been at the Four Courts half an hour ago," he said; "I've a big case to make up." It was the case which made his reputation and set him on that brilliant way of easy yet strenuous effort that combined, with the excitement and the applause he loved, to break his heart.

Another time he met with a stalwart gipsy man, a "tinker" as they call them in Ireland—a big, bullet-headed fellow with a great shock of grizzled curls and a face burnt almost black by the sun. There was some suggestion of the Wine God in his looks—the Wine God disguised for amorous adventures perhaps. We trudged the length of a long mountain road with him. The "tinker" was sprung of a line of famous pipers; his father had won the All-Ireland prize at the Feis. For all his pagan looks the fellow was a Christian gipsy and would receive Christian burial when he died, although the house was not built that could harbour him for long, nor the roof-tree that he would not feel an intolerable oppression between him and the sky.

They talked of many things and I listened. The "tinker's" forbears had fought in the Rebellion of '98—on the right side, be sure. Wasn't his grandfather killed at Oulart Hollow? He talked of "the troubles," looking from side to side in the twilight as though the bronze hedgerow might yet conceal a lurking spy or an armed yeoman. He was going over the mountains to Bray, walking. Some time in the early morning he would be there. He had my companion's last half-crown—this was before the great case brought the briefs raining upon John O'Mahony—and as he shambled off with his long trotting gait up the mountain side, a long, long look of sore desire for the freedom of the night and the hills followed him.

"He'll find a cave in the hills to-night," said the longing voice, "and he'll fill it with dead leaves for a bed. The stars and the moon'll be looking in at him."

After we had gone a little way the subject recurred.

"Did you notice," he asked, "the great walk of him from the hips ? And did you see how his brogues were slit down to give his foot freedom in walking ? It would be grand to be out with him on the hillside to-night listening to his stories and songs. A grand life for a man surely."

Those were golden days and golden walks long ago. One never knew how good they were while they lasted. Once as we went along he prodded at a tiny beetle with his stick.

"Look at him now," he said ; "he's putting out the two little spurs behind to defend himself. There isn't an old woman in the County Cork that wouldn't run after him and stamp him out of existence. He is the *daire dhoul*, the devil's beetle, and they think there's a hundred days indulgence for killing him. You never heard of the *daire dhoul ?* Why surely you did. He betrayed our Lord to the Jews. He had escaped His enemies and was out in the open country. As he passed through a cornfield the men were sowing the corn. Because of His passing it sprang into golden grain, and bent itself into long avenues to let Him pass, closing up after Him so that none should know the way He had gone. The apple boughs, covered with blossom, bent low before Him, and the blossom ripened to yellow golden fruit. The next day came His enemies and found the reapers reaping the corn. 'Did such a man pass this way?' they asked. 'He passed, but when the corn was being sown,' said the reapers. Now they had gathered a basket of the fruit to refresh them, and on an apple there sat the *daire dhoul.* He put up his evil little black head, and said in Irish, 'Inagh, inagh,' which means 'Yesterday, yesterday.' That is why he is the *daire dhoul*, the devil's beetle, and accursed."

From this it would be an easy transition to Conall Carnach. I can hear the soft, wailing Cork brogue and remember the very smells, the dead leaves and the smoke from the mountains where the heather was on fire, of that autumn day years ago.

"You know that Conall Carnach, the Lord of Dunseverick, was present at the Crucifixion. No? Well, all the nations of the earth were represented there, and Conall was for the Irish. He was a famous wrestler, and that is how he came to leave his Castle of Dunseverick, near Ballycastle, on the Antrim coast. He travelled all over the world wrestling, and took part in the gladiatorial games in Rome. Well, he came to Jerusalem the very day of the Crucifixion. He came up with the crowd just as the time Veronica gave the napkin to our Lord to dry His face, and he saw Simon help Him to carry the Cross. Everyone noticed his great size and his beauty as he stood below the Cross. While he stood there a drop of our Lord's blood fell upon his head. That was the first Christian baptism of all Ireland. Then Conall saw the soldiers flinging dice for the seamless garment, and said, 'Let me have a throw.'

They agreed, and his throw of the dice won the prize. But he refused it, because he had been profoundly impressed by the august death he had witnessed. They say that each representative of the Gentile nations present that day was privileged to render our Lord a service. And Conall Carnach's was—you know they say the Angel rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre for the Resurrection: no, then, it was Conall Carnach that put his great shoulder to it, and sent it spinning. He was the first to bring to Ireland the name of Christ and the story of His Crucifixion."

And then again it would be some homely saint of his own family.

"Saints! Sure my own great-grandmother's uncle, Father O'Brien, was as great a saint as any of them. We have his pyx in the family still. There was a young girl at Muskerry dying of a decline, and he was sent for to anoint her. She was the only support of her old father and mother, and a good girl she was. Well, he had given her the Last Sacraments and was leaving her when she caught at his skirt. 'God can do more than that for me,' she says. 'If you believe it stand up and help your parents,' he said, holding out his hand to her. She stood up, sound in life and limb, and lived to be an old woman. There was a little boy, a cripple, at Kilcrea, and one day he sat on a ditch overlooking a field where there was a hurling match. He was very sad because he could never play at hurley. There were two men playing and one cursed the other. The little cripple on the ditch rebuked the curser for the honour of God. Now, while this was happening, there came by Father O'Brien. 'Why aren't you hurling, boy?' he asked. The boy pointed to his crooked limb for answer. 'Go and play,' said Father O'Brien, 'go and play.' That was all, but the little cripple jumped from the ditch, ran into the field, and joined the play, using his crutch for a *caman*.

"Those were the penal days, and it was not easy for a priest to live at all with a price on his head. But there were good Protestants who said it was hard that people shouldn't be allowed their own creed and their own minister, and it was in and out of their houses Father O'Brien lived. It was at the fairs he used to meet his people and move about among them as a drover, finding out when marriages were called for or christenings, and giving word of the place where the Mass was to be said. Well, a scoundrel named R—— made a plot to seize and betray Father O'Brien. The family is known and disrespected in Cork to this day. He got half-a-dozen scoundrels to assist him, and they joined the priest as he was leaving the Fair of Ballinhassig and entered into conversation with him. Now, they had to cross the Lee at a certain point by stepping-stones, and midway the stream R—— tripped Father O'Brien and he fell and lay in the stream. *And all the time he was carrying the Sacred Host in his breast.* Well, they tied him up and then and there took him to the house of a gentleman named Gillman, who was a magistrate, or whatever corresponded to it in those days. He was one of the good Protestants, and when the scoundrels had taken themselves off he gave Father O'Brien his liberty. Of the men who had betrayed him all died violent deaths within a few years, except old R——, and he lived and apparently thrived. But in his old age he was following a fox-hunt, and he was seen hard after the fox crossing the hill of Garvagh. Well, it might as well have been a hill into the other world; for, after he had topped it, tale or tidings of him no man ever heard. His horse was found drowned some time after, just floating out of the river to the sea.

"I could tell you a score of such things. It's a thousand pities you haven't the Irish. The Munster peasants are full of stories, not only of Christ and the Saints, but of heroes and chieftains. Did you ever hear that Hugh O'Neill only said two tender things in all his life of hard fighting? One was to his wife, Mabel Bagnal; the other was to Hugh O'Donnell. It was at the Battle of Kinsale. Over all the roar and tumult of the battle the old chieftain could be heard calling to the young one, who was flashing through the battle like a brand, '*Thororn-na-cha, Aodh! Thororn-na-cha!*' which is, 'Keep close to me, Hugh! Keep close to me, Hugh!' Then there was a grand man, Donal the Bastard, of whom I have many stories. But I will tell you those some other day."

"Write them down," I used to say, "write them down." But he was not much good at writing down, and he was ready to give his stories away to anyone who wanted them, although at the back of his mind he had the intention always of writing some day. Indeed, he began a novel or two and laid them aside. There was nothing he possessed he would not give away. You had only to tell him that you had an order for a story and could not find a plot, an occasion for an article and could not find a subject, and he was thoughtful for a moment. Then he would give you his plot or his subject. Perhaps one part of the truth about him was that he could not write for money. In his college days he shouldered the editorship and practically all the work of an archæological journal which brought him little fame and no fortune—only he loved doing it. Later, when he was on circuit—solicitors clamouring for him—he would find time to write long letters, full of stories; now and again a folk story or a legend.

"You should weave it into a ballad, the story of St.

Gobnet, the little patroness of Ballyvourney, after whom so many County Cork girls are called. It is Englished, 'Abby.' She was a sea-king's daughter and he was a shrine-robber. She had no sisters or mother and used to keep to the ship with him and his men. Once she was ashore in a wood and God sent an angel to tell her to fly from her father, and to give her life to Himself. Well, she would, but she knew no place of security. The angel told her to travel and give no rest to the sole of her foot until she would find nine white deer asleep. She went on and she came to a place and found *three*. She fondled them a while and then went on to Kilgobnet, where she found *six*. Here she stayed till they were all good friends. Then she left her heart with them and went on to Ballyvourney. There, as God willed it, she found the *nine*, and she made her dwelling with them and they became her sisters, and she died in their midst and is there buried."

Everywhere he went he met with the most delicious adventures. "Wherever he goes something is bound to happen," said one who preceded him into the shadows. Indeed, all life conspired to make mirth and adventure for him.

For some two years before his death he suffered greatly, but put his sufferings out of sight. A superhuman courage enabled him to keep the signs and portents of those years from the one who loved him best. He was ordered rest, rest, rest—an impossible prescription for him. "Sure he wouldn't take care of himself," said a homely lover of his since; "and who could blame him? I hear that when he came out of court there was a row of cars waiting for him, and the people fighting for who'd have him." Probably there was some truth in the picturesque statement. He was the best and gayest company in all the world. On circuit he was called up to the judges' table. He could be as audacious as he liked with the big men of his own or another profession. He only provoked smiles and honest laughter wherever he went.

He used to come in bubbling over with stories. In the midst of them a heart-spasm would seize him, and he would sink on a chair and turn his face away. As soon as it had gone by he would begin anew. He could not but laugh and make others laugh, even between one heart-spasm and another.

At this time, as always, he was giving away with both hands. He had the most beautiful generosity; and to need money was the passport to his purse. He had the curious local patriotism which belongs to Cork men only out of all Ireland—why, let the student of history explain; and every Cork man was his brother, in a more special way than that which made every poor devil his brother. He knew to the full the exquisiteness of giving. The study he would have thought least worth while would have been the study of finance. All sorts of poor devils were helped on by his bounty. Since his death the most hopeless, helpless, pushed-to-the-wall waiter, incapable of waiting, met me with a watery eye in a Dublin hotel.

"I saw you with—him," he said. "Ah, sure he was a terrible loss to me. I'd never have kept goin' only for him. And sure we're down in the dirt, myself and the wife and childher since he was taken."

"Listen, sir," said a Dublin carman when he lay dying, hailing a friend of his—"how is he?"

"He could hardly be worse and live."

"Ah well, may the blessing of God go with him! I wouldn't have a horse and car to-day, only for him."

"Tell me now," the friend said curiously. "Did he help you to buy back the horse or the car?"

"Well, indeed, sir, to tell you the truth, he put a bit of money into both for me: may the Lord reward him!"

One always knew where he was by the milestones of his gifts. When a basketful of speckled silver trout, or a little barrel of oysters from the Atlantic, or a little jar of whiskey, arrived by the parcel post, one always knew by the post-mark just how far he had got on circuit. One laughed then, tenderly affectionate, over those late nights of long ago when he would come sidling in in the small hours and disarm your righteous indignation by a present put into your hand before the cool and cutting speeches you had prepared could begin to be uttered.

While he lay dying briefs rained upon his bed, with gifts, for everyone loved him; and the carriages of the judges stood outside his door. They sent him comfortable messages. He was to take time to get well. No matter what happened, he would be looked after. One of the hardest-headed men in all Ireland, the most implacable of enemies but soft-hearted somewhere out of sight, came in mysteriously in the dusk of the evening and left a banknote for a large amount on his bed. "The other fellows quarrel over who will devil for me," he wrote in his last letter, "and toss me over the guineas with a laugh." "The little nurse who's looking after me," he wrote, "woke me out of a most beautiful sleep last night to give me my sleeping-draught."

During the last month he had terrible attacks of heart-failure, in which he seemed to die only to rally amazingly. Between the attacks he was writing to the clamouring solicitors that he hoped to be back at work in a week—in ten days. He was lying at a seaside hotel, where they had sent him in the hope that he might sleep—the one chance for him. The dispensary doctor who was called up in the bitter November nights, and would come running through the village dressing himself as he ran ; the Dublin specialist whose motor car would come whizzing almost as soon as he had been rung up on the telephone—they fought death hand to hand for him, for love. Neither would accept money for their services. They are splendidly Quixotic, those Irish doctors.

Just the last day he had to live, when he seemed better, he was heard saying over to himself the verses of the *Dies Iræ*, muttering between, " What a coward I am ! What a coward I am ! " He, who had fought pain and death with such superb courage, never crying out, never complaining, through the immense suffering !

" I never saw men crying openly as they did at his funeral," someone wrote. " Everyone was crying."

Indeed, people cry yet at his grave—his grave in the village street below the mountains, the street which he used to trudge so cheerfully in the nights and the bad weather. His grave is never alone. He was generous and friendly indiscriminately to the just and the unjust. " The beggars loved him," someone said ; " and there's always a beggar praying by his grave." The last time I was there a friend of his who was visiting the grave suddenly burst into tears and apologised for his weakness. " It was seeing the crocuses coming up above him," he said. " I couldn't bear to see them, realising that he'd never return."

He knew everybody between the four seas of Ireland, and was friendly with them all. Between the four seas was lamentation when he died. Love covers his grave like roses.

CHAPTER XIV

1897—98

I ALWAYS think of those days at the Crescent as set in an atmosphere of yellowness. One used to awake in the morning to yellow fog, with Jane Barlow's canary singing that oddly mechanical song of the canary, which is as much of the town as the barrel organ. He was a dear little canary. He used to pause in his singing to listen for an answering canary, poor prisoner in his cage always mateless—and he was full of pretty tricks. If he loved you he would set to demolish your finger with beak and claw, so gently, that the pretended anger was sweeter than a caress. One day while I wrote I saw him looking at me with a queer pluffed-up look, as though his feathers stared. It was a very hot day. Some hour of the afternoon when it was hottest I saw him droop. Dear Heavens, I had forgotten to give him water! The helpless patience of the small creature! It was only just not too late.

Mentally I vowed never again to keep a creature in a cage. It was too awful a responsibility. A little boy who was a friend of mine had warned me against keeping a lark in a cage which had a solid top. He had found a fledgling in the fields and had nursed it so tenderly that it lived and was merry. Till the spring came. A shaft of sunlight fell on the lark's cage one day. He gave a queer croak. Up to this he had not attempted to sing. Then—he shot up, and cracked his little skull against the cage-top. "If you want to keep a lark in a cage," said the small boy, "see that it has a canvas top."

The canary was not so bad as some of its fellows, for it looked out on trees, not on the stony street. The little garden proper to the house refused to grow roses, but it grew other things. In February it was something for a canary to behold when the crocuses came up in thick masses of clean gold, purple, and white. They were beautiful for an hour till those rascals, the London sparrows, tore them to rags with shouts of glee over their destructiveness. The sparrows selected the yellow crocuses for destruction ; and their caprice was a remarkable thing, for they might tear up five crocus buds and leave the sixth absolutely untouched, though they began their wicked games again at the seventh, as they might leave a whole bed untouched and demolish the next.

A small boy, not yet much in evidence, called that garden "The dirty garden." We were better off than the Meynells, who, in Palace Court, had one parched tree at the back of the house in an arid patch ; one could not imagine how the poor tree derived its sustenance, since the plot it grew in was dry as the sands of the desert. Once when I stayed there I heard an exquisite Meynell child asking plaintively for a duster "to dust the poor tree in the backy garden."

We used to go about the streets filled with the yellow haze to do our marketing. London is, or was then, still Dickens's London. We became acquainted with all manner of odd Dickens characters. We used to go to the street market in the Portobello Road sometimes for "divarsion." One inferred the many Irish round about from the highly coloured pictures of saints and Irish patriots on the costers' barrows. There was indeed an Irish colony in the Potteries. Side by side with the Potteries was Notting Dale, a bad London slum, with something at least of an Irish population. While we were at the Crescent a couple of men from Notting Dale were hanged for the murder of an old man at Muswell Hill. It was a dangerous slum. The biggest policemen in London, with broad Irish brogues, were on duty round about. As is the way in London, you walked along a perfectly respectable thoroughfare of good houses, from which branched off alleys that led into the wicked slum. We used to hear the people of the slum going home of nights, on Saturday night especially, after midnight; and one shivered in one's bed for fear of the slum. Sometimes there was a boastful Irish speech shouted along the Crescent, and the crying of children. Poor London children, dragged at the heels of their parents in the small hours!

Father White, from the little Church of the Oblates of St. Charles, just within the Potteries, used to say that the children were young angels. He was a small saint himself, an Oxford convert, of a most heavenly gentleness. We often said that the slum-dwellers would be better in the pastoral care of a big Irish priest, who could administer corporal chastisement if necessary.

An Irish doctor told us that in the worst part of the Dale only a doctor or a priest was safe. The big policemen went down in couples. The doctor told us that he could reduce the worst Irish ruffian of the Dale to abject humility by the simple question, "When were you at your 'duty'?" Religion dies hard in the Irish.

Some innocent creatures came from the Potteries. There was an old blue-eyed Irishman from whom we used to buy groundsel for the canary. He always had very wilted groundsel, and he wanted to give me the whole basket for twopence. I do not suppose it was worth much more. A merchant of the more business-like nation, who shouted "Groundsole for Dicky Bird" through the crescents and squares, was really the canary's purveyor; but we always dealt with our countryman, even though we spilt the groundsel into a garden as soon as his back was turned.

He ought to have been in Ireland, of course, but he had hurt a man in the Co. Kildare forty-five years ago—"he was very hot then, and a row riz on him and before he knew where he was his hand went out." He was afraid to go back. When you suggested that perhaps he had not hurt the man very much he said, "Maybe aye, maybe no. Anyway it's forty-five years ago." He took a great interest in his countryman, Paudeen, and talked about his own dog, telling us how he had been turned from lodging after lodging with his dog till he found someone who would take in the two of them. He may have had a hope of finding a good home for the dog. He described the dog in a Homeric strain. I cut out the other day from an Irish newspaper a letter, written by a Co. Clare man, extolling the virtues of the blue Irish terrier, and I remembered my old friend. He used to stand with the groundsel basket at his feet rubbing his hands softly together and cackling his old laugh as he told stories of the "cuteness" of the dog. We had asked him many times what breed the dog was, and he had trailed off into a story and forgotten to answer. At last we held him to it. His blue eyes wandered. He was visibly embarrassed.

"He's the sort of breed of a dog that you call a mongerel," he said at last.

Sometimes there were fogs of a thick blackness, when you crossed the streets under the guardianship of your ears, since your eyes were useless. We had days of it sometimes when gaslight and lamplight went on all day and night, when day and night passed into each other without any dividing line, to the amazement of the canary and the baby, turning inquiring eyes towards the odd sun which went on shining all day. Those black fogs were not nice to walk about in when one remembered one's neighbours in the Dale.

There were cotton-wool fogs. We came home from the Meynells' in one, one Christmas night. There was a priest from St. Charles' Square of the party, and, as we passed into the cotton-wool from the Meynells' deep doorway, we called back cheerfully that we could find the way blindfold. I do not suppose Wilfrid, speeding us from the steps, either heard or saw us. But when you pass intersecting streets without knowing it, shrouded thickly in cotton-wool that shuts out sound and sense and vision, you are soon at fault. We found ourselves up against the railings of invisible houses, where neither railings nor houses should be in our knowledge of Westbourne Grove. A policeman with a torch put us on our right way. As we went, other policemen with torches stood at the street corners and called out the names of the roads. The arc lamps showed for a second a blur high up in the haze. By the light of one I saw an unwinking London baby, round-eyed, hanging across its mother's shoulder and staring, staring till it and she were once more swallowed up.

There was a day when we stood and stared at our first motor car high up on Notting Hill near Ladbroke Square. For a time we stood to stare at all motors, but very soon they ceased to be novelties. The first motors were truncated things with nothing where the horse ought to be, very strange and ugly we thought them.

We were looking on at a disappearing London. Are the taxis as good as the hansoms ? The trot of the horse, the jingling of the harness and the bells, as the hansom came down a smooth suburban road—how full of romance was the sound ! or so it seems in the ears of fogydom. The gay hansoms in the long-dead summers, covered with an awning, the looking-glasses inside, the bunch of flowers, the match-holders, the smart driver with a flower in his coat—ah, they held all the enchantment of one's youth. They were very good anyhow—but in circumstances they were Love's own chariot for two. Does anyone now bid a taxi-driver go round and round the Park, or by unfrequented roads? How gay it used to be of summer evenings in the Season, when all the world was going out to dine, and the West End streets were moving lines of hansoms going either way! The ugly lumbering taxi—the motor 'bus—the motors, which have taken the place of the stately carriage and pair (motors have no breeding; you cannot tell at a glance off-hand if they belong to a prince or a publican): they have no souls.

They are driven by soulless mechanics who used often to be alien enemies. Patriotism disappeared from London streets with the introduction of motor traffic. The taxi-driver is not a sportsman. There are no sporting of favours. We went all through London on a Boat Race Day soon after the taxi had arrived and saw not a single knot of blue. Your old hansom-driver, your old 'bus-driver, kept English institutions alive and going. One remembers the 'bus driver, and how affable he was to passengers, especially to the intrepid ones who climbed the knife-board to sit in dizzy perches by his side. What stores of information he had, especially for the country cousin; what a Father Christmas face! *Eheu fugaces!* But it will only make the young smile to hear the old lament; yet they too are seeing a London which disappears more dizzily fast than we could have dreamt of in the leisurely 'nineties.

We had taken the Crescent house for four years. It was not long before one of us at least was sighing for the fields. But the thrush came to the forest trees in January and shouted between the houses as though Notting Hill and Notting Dale were still places to go a-nutting. There I learnt the strange and heavenly beauty of the Spring as she comes to London : for some day as you are walking between the black house-fronts you are aware that the flowering currant, who begins, has shaken out a crumpled green leaf from a sooty twig. And next she has a cramped crimson blossom, stretching its limbs so to speak. Another day and a thin wild fire of the most heavenly green has run up the black boughs and twigs and is shining like a green light against the black walls. That green and black is something germane to London. You can see it nowhere else. It is a caprice to enchant the Japanese. Then comes the almond blossom, pale pink and with no leaves, to make another lovely contrast to the black. And presently you walk on dust of roses, for one day when the almond is falling. When you see the first leaf of the flowering currant emerging from its folds, if you are like me, your heart will go down on its knees in the London streets to praise God.

I have mentioned Father White of the Oblates of St. Charles as among our visitors. There came also Father Wyndham from St. Mary of the Angels, a cousin of Mr. George Wyndham, who was afterwards to be my dear and good friend. Even then I had a feeling for the Wyndhams that there was no one else like them. Perhaps it was that I had a devotion to Lord Edward Fitzgerald to start with ; that I had made a cult of him ; that I was saturated in all that could be known concerning him ; that he was in a sense my dream-hero ; that I was writing about him when I was not writing about Mr. Parnell. It must have been somewhere about that time that Louise Imogen Guiney, accidentally American, essentially English of Oxford with a dash of Irish, said to me :

" K. T., Lord Edward is not dead. There is a young man in the House of Commons called George Wyndham, and while he lives Lord Edward can never die."

I had met a very charming Pamela Wyndham twice at Crabbet Park, as I have told in my "Twenty-Five Years." She is a most fragrant and lovely memory to me. For a long time I thought she was Mr. George Wyndham's sister. She was his cousin, the daughter of Sir Hugh Wyndham of Rogate. Her brother, Mr. Percy Wyndham, was at Crabbet also. He was a big, rather heavily-built young man. I heard afterwards a story of how when Mr. George Wyndham was Chief Secretary for Ireland Mr. Percy Wyndham came on a visit. The next morning was a hunting morning. The Chief Secretary sent off a message to a friend for a mount for Mr. Percy Wyndham. There was a misunderstanding. Mr. Percy Wyndham was taken to mean Mr. George Wyndham's son, then a child of eleven or twelve. The horses came round. There was a very smart little pony of about ten hands provided for Mr. Percy Wyndham, who rode fourteen stone.

However, to return to Father Wyndham. He had the Wyndham charm, and there is nothing quite like it that I know of. He had a delightful fancy for reading my books for girls, less remarkable because they are in reality harmless novels. He told us an agreeable story. An old great-aunt, or some such kin of his, when her young relatives were led up to her for countenance and advice used to dismiss them with "Always say your prayers, and always dress for dinner." That summed up the old lady's whole precept of conduct, and a very good precept too.

The first time Father Wyndham came to see us happened to be on an Ash Wednesday. My heretical cook sent up the usual tea—hot buttered toast, buttered teacakes, cream, etc. Father Wyndham enjoyed his tea.

So did I, never remembering that it was a black-fast day for him and me. We remembered afterwards that he had laughed a good deal during the meal as though at some secret jest. I am sure it was the Wyndham manners that made him eat what was set before him without remonstrance.

I remember once at a dinner-party at a Catholic house the abstinence was forgotten. Two fidgety ladies refused everything but the fish. The host, the kindest of men, was greatly distressed and insisted on having further *maigre* dishes prepared for them, while I and the other Catholics ate what was set before us. I mentioned the case to a Jesuit afterwards, asking him which of us was right in his opinion. He said: "The greatest of these is Charity. It was certainly uncharitable and unkind for the others to mortify their host in that way."

We had, as I have said, the house in the Crescent for four years. We occupied it two years. The brick and mortar that lay between us and the clean country was like a burden on my heart. Urban joys soon palled. But I have always been grateful to the Crescent that she sent me running, like a young child, to the arms of my mother, the Country Green. Pent up in Notting Hill, what dreams I used to have of the country! Oh, that first thrust in the January "dirty garden." There was a verse from a poem of Henley's in "The Song of the Sword"—inscribed to me, "K. T. H. Sorori in Arte, W. E. H."—which I used to say over to myself as I lay sleepless on my bed.

"Let us take horse, dear heart, horse and away,
As from swart April to the green lap of May,
To quietness and the fresh and fragrant breasts
Of the dim delicious night not yet aware
In any of her innumerable nests
Of that first, sudden plash of dawn,
Clear, sapphirine, luminous, large."

I used to think of cycling between hedges of the may, which breathes forth so heady a fragrance, going on and on into what I called "deep country." I was always saying "I want *deep* country." It is quite easy to be put off with a substitute near London. Within twenty miles of London that part of the trees turned to London is black with soot, while the other part shows the clean bark. I loved the poor black London trees—the trees which, as Mrs. Meynell has said, can never go asleep in the dark; but when I went to the country I wanted trees not piebald and roses that you could pick without soiling your fingers.

One of the friends of those days was a minister of the Auld Lichts, the small Scottish sect, about which Sir J. M. Barrie writes in his stories of Kirriemuir. The sect may be small and narrow, but not so its minister, the Rev. Alexander Smellie, whom I am always glad to think of as among my dear and honoured friends. He was—and is—a man of remarkable literary taste and knowledge. His books, "In the Hour of Silence," "The Companions of Jesus," "Lift up Your Hearts," and others, are to my mind among the beautiful spiritual books, and are as suited for the reading of a Catholic like myself as for an Auld Licht—indeed more suitable. Perhaps not many Auld Lichts would rise to the breadth and real holiness of these books. His "Men of the Covenant" is a big contribution to the personal history of those old divines, of whom we know too little, in whom tenderness and bitterness were met, fanaticism and love.

I learnt a deal from Mr. Smellie about these men and came to love some of them whom I should otherwise have hated. For instance, Cotton Mather, who burnt the New England witches, wrote of his wife's death:—

"I had never yet seen such a Black Day in all the Time of my Pilgrimage. Two hours before my lovely

Consort died I kneeled by her bedside and I took into my two hands a dear Hand, the dearest in the World. With her thus in my hands I solemnly and sincerely gave her up to the Lord: and in token of my real Resignation, I gently put her out of my hands and laid away a most lovely Hand, resolving that I would never touch it any more. This was the hardest and perhaps the bravest action that ever I did."

See how the heart of the dour fanatic, as he would else be to us, bleeds. Mr. Smellie had the art of making all he touched literature. He used to produce a calendar every year for his flock, full of poetry and distinction. He edited the "Sunday School Teacher's Chronicle"—or "Journal," was it?—to which I contributed, a weird fact considering my opinions and those of my readers. I wrote a series of articles on the poets of the day, and later a series on children in the books of modern writers. In handling the poets I thought only of what I liked, and there must have been a deal of Papistical stuff in the "Sunday School Teacher's Chronicle" in those days. Mr. Smellie had a dear brown-eyed Scottish lassie as wife. He brought her to see us later on; and we were agreed that she was worthy of her husband; and that was saying a great deal. They had much sorrow afterwards and it broke off the correspondence; but I have always a memory of those two, so fresh, so simple, so sweet-natured.

What other memories have I of the Crescent? Nothing stirred in the big world in which I had a part. Indeed, nothing was stirring. Before the South African War times were stagnant. Money was growing and luxury and the sins that follow in the track of luxury, and poverty and discontent and hatred between classes; and these things grew even more in the years following the South African War, till it was necessary that the world should be saved again by the sacrifice of its best.

One little memory I have of Sundays at the Crescent in the second winter, Sundays when Lionel Johnson used to come for the early meal and go with us to the Meynells for supper. On certain of those Sundays I was in charge of the nursery, where the baby, who is now in khaki, was supposed to sleep away the afternoon hours of his nurse's absence while I read a novel. I never got past the first page of the novel, for my charge used to awake in a furious mood at the attempt to palm off on him a mother for a nurse. I remember Lionel Johnson appearing in the nursery doorway, tip-toe, his finger-tips pressed together in a characteristic gesture. " Ah," he would say, " Father Dawson has not washed all the devil out of him "—referring to his baptism ; and again, " Paudeen is much nicer and better behaved "—statements which, though interesting, were not helpful.

Lionel Johnson is so much associated with those days that I must tell one or two stories about him. There was the Irish nun, who in a motherly way rebuked him for keeping the hours of grown men. " But do you know what age I am ? " he asked ; " I am twenty-seven." " I don't care what age you are," she replied ; " you don't look it and you ought not to do it." He winced when I once accidentally called him " little " Lionel. Once at an Irish hotel he met an old gentleman who suffered from being taken to be younger than he really was. He asked Lionel to guess his age, and Lionel guessed it even beyond what it was. He then guessed Lionel to be some years older than his actual age. They were mutually delighted with each other, and Lionel promised to go and stay with him at some indefinite date.

When Lionel was in Dublin he used to visit a good deal at the house of a Dublin journalist, whose wife was something of a sceptic. While the husband was seeing the newspaper through his wife and Lionel sat up waiting for him, arguing, while they waited, many things, the immortality of the soul among them. Lionel was always on the side of the angels, and was distressed at the lady's scepticism. One night they made a compact that whichever died first should come back and tell what lay the other side. After Lionel's death this lady dreamt a dream in which Lionel came and stood by her bed. She meant to say "What is Heaven like"—but by some odd blunder she asked "What is Hell like?" He looked at her in a haughty, offended way, and said, "How should I know what Hell is like?"—and with that he vanished. One could see Lionel's face of offence.

Even when we were out of town Lionel used to come from Lincoln's Inn to the Crescent to visit Paudeen. They understood each other. Lionel, with Paudeen on his knee, would beg us half-humorously to give him the little dog.

The Laurels, Mount Avenue, Ealing, and the Crescent have all, or nearly all, the associations with Lionel. A year's absence of ours in the country and Ireland broke up the constant meetings. After we had come back and settled at Ealing once more he renewed the Sunday visits. He used to come early and go off to the High Mass at St. Benedict's, spending the rest of the day with us. This custom was unfortunately broken by our going out of town when the summer months came. I never saw him again. My husband met him one day that summer (1902) in the "Green Dragon" in Fleet Street. Lionel left the people he was with and came towards him, the light of pleasure on his face, murmuring the little "A-ah!" which was his greeting, and they sat and talked for a while, and he promised to visit us at our

Surrey inn. A little later he called at my husband's chambers in the Temple to ask if we were still out of town.

As we came up in the train on our homeward journey we read of his death in the *Daily Chronicle*. There were foolish rumours about his death. He died by the simplest accident. Sitting on a high stool at the counter of the "Green Dragon" he overbalanced and fell on the back of his head. As he had fallen on a thick Turkey carpet serious injury was not suspected. He was taken to Charing Cross Hospital, where his long unconsciousness puzzled the doctors. Father Dawson, the friend whom we had brought him, went to see him and was alarmed at his strange leaden stupor and the little line of froth about his lips. The fall had fractured his skull, which was abnormally thin—as thin as a young child's.

One sad October morning we went to Kensal Green to see the last of him on earth. A little group of his friends were there, but not so many as there would have been if people had known beyond the readers of a paragraph in the *Chronicle*, easily overlooked. Very often I receive letters concerning him. He died—for his friends and one doubts not for the angels—in the odour of sanctity. He was no François Villon or Kit Marlowe as some legends would make him. He had an abnormal nervous system, and it exacted what more ordinary people could do without. But he never went down. To the last day of his life he was a delicate little fine gentleman and scholar and poet and philosopher and saint; and the grosser vices never came near him. His memory is fragrant.

Another memory of the Crescent is of Jim Alderson, home from India where a tiger had clawed the muscle out of one arm, and that his sword-arm. He was having all possible treatment to make it useful again, so that he need not give up the profession he loved. I remember him—slender, elegant, a little pale, so unlike the freckled boy in shabby homespuns who had won my affectionate friendship long ago, when he was being coached for the Army at a Norfolk vicarage where I was a visitor.

And there was Frank Mathew, whose book "The Wood of the Brambles" gave earnest, we thought, of the Irish novelist we had long been waiting for. He wrote in a language which the English reader did not understand; and the Irish reader was too much occupied in going after half-gods or false gods to be aware of him. But some day a critic like Henley will turn up "The Wood of the Brambles" and say "Here is something that was too good save for the elect." And then Frank Mathew's books may or may not come to their own, for the elect is but a handful anywhere; and, in Ireland, if you are a Protestant you read one class of books, and if you are a Catholic you read another; and if you want to depart from this course your Protestant or Catholic bookseller sees that you are kept in it.

CHAPTER XV

HOLIDAYS

As I have said, the time at the Crescent was diversified by many holidays. A lady who also lived in the Crescent said that we did not deserve to have a house, since ours so often stood empty. I dare say she used to cast an envious eye upon it when it stood empty, since she had nine girls, all married to men in the Services except the handsome red-haired youngest who was going the same way. There was always a couple of daughters home with their children and nurses, sometimes an ayah or a flat-faced Chinese amah, and it was a matter of speculation with us as to where they all slept.

Twice we went down to St. Margaret's Bay, accom panied by Paudeen, who at first view of the place, when we had alighted at the top of the steep descent to the beach, kicked up the grass with his hind feet with the air of one who takes possession, before he trotted down to the queer, delightful old cottage on the beach, now demolished. We had it for our own for some six good weeks before the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. The first thing Paudeen did on arrival was to drive out the dog belonging to the cottage.

That was our second visit. Our first was to the St. Margaret's Bay Hotel, right under the cliff—a dear, bright clean place, where literature was in evidence. That week-end Mr. Robert Hichens was our fellow-guest at the hotel; and there was also the old actor, Mr. Henry Kemble. Their talk used to reach us across the pretty dining-room. I have a vivid memory of an occasion on which Mr. Hichens tried to explain the difference between Sir Gilbert Parker and Mr. Louis Parker, and was waved away by the old actor, who had known all things before the novelist was born. There was also in the quiet time that followed the week-end Mr. Norman Potter, who is now a Catholic and a philanthropist. He lent me Nansen's big book " Farthest North," which was just out, and told us a good many interesting things in the one evening we talked together ; but the next morning he set off walking to Walmer along the stoniest beach I know, and we saw no more of him. Mr. Hichens used to write his novels at that delightful little hotel. Several literary names were in the visitors' book, a book quite unlike the ordinary sort, which make you squirm for the fatuity of your kind. Miss Marie Corelli, then at the zenith of her fame, had had tea there, and had recorded the fact in the visitors' book—adding, " Very pleased to see the ' Sorrows of Satan ' on the table in the drawing-room." Underneath this another distinguished novelist had written : " Thank God, it's not there now." Not so long afterwards I read a highly eulogistic article on Miss Corelli's work, signed by the same name.

St. Margaret's Bay was very delightful at that time. Its sole touch with Dover was the carrier's cart, which used to execute all the commissions and bring all the messages. The cliffs were covered with the most wonderful variety of wild flowers I have ever seen. Great masses of bee-orchis hung suspended from the sides of the cliffs. You could ascend by the steepest of zig-zags to the Granville Arms Hotel, which looked as though any day at all it might come sliding down to the beach. There was just a handful of houses—no more. There was an inn which must have been there in the time the Napoleonic invasion was a terror. It was reported to have tunnels running under the cliff and great cellars concealed since the days of the smugglers. I know we got some exceedingly good wine from that inn. The proprietor looked exactly as though he belonged to those famous days. The inn stood back behind a long garden of flowers and fruit trees and vegetables, and you walked up the path to the door between masses of white clove-pinks. I always place the scene of Mr. Kipling's "Four and Twenty Ponies" in St. Margaret's Bay. The drinking water used to be carried from a spring at the foot of the chalk-cliffs when the tide was out: when it was in, you saw a long stream of fresh water in the midst of the salt. The curfew rang every evening from the church tower of St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe, by the endowment of someone whom the opportune bell had saved from walking over the cliffs' edge on a dark night.

Our wooden cottage was truly delightful. Downstairs we had a sitting-room which opened by wide doors on to the lawn overlooking the sea. By the side of the doors there were clumps of the biggest wine-red wall-flowers I have ever seen. I remember the May nights and the moon on the sea and the smell of the wall-flowers and myself reading a book of Laurence Housman's, "All Fellows." I must have read other books, but that I remember. I used to get bundles of novels for review sent down by kind Sir Douglas Straight, by Lewis Hind (the editor of the *Academy*), and by Clement Shorter.

We had a little dining-room: the steepest of wooden stairs ascended to a bedroom with a latch and bobbin like the door of Red Riding Hood's grandmother. The bedroom was hung round with pictures of holy persons and Irish patriots, for the owners of the cottage were from Kinsale in the Co. Cork. It was all exquisitely clean, and there were a couple of doves in a cage just outside our window. One awoke in the morning to the cooing of the doves and the screaming of the stones on the beach being dragged down and flung back by the tide.

"I number none that are not golden hours," like the sundial, so I will omit a dreadful sick-and-sorry trip to St. Leonards, when, going down, a pair of invalids, on a balmy St. Patrick's Day, the next day found us in the grip of the vilest nor'-easter. How we were kept in the house day after day! I remember the shiver of the winter evergreens in the window-boxes of the hotel and the cold light of the north upon the shiny leaves. One wanted to get out and walk and walk and walk, away from the nervous terrors that beset one, but we were house-bound; and there was a Sunday when Sabbatarianism locked the billiard-room, and the few guests in the hotel sat in their bedrooms and presumably read their Bibles. A chattering, empty little woman in the drawing-room, just as it began to grow dark, never knew what a narrow escape she had of having the fireirons thrown at her. The perpetual wailing for his mother of the spoilt only child of the hotel-keepers—he used to get out of bed at night and wail down the stairs for "Mammy!" "Mammy!"—was torture. One of us had escaped to male society in some masculine retreat. The other went through an acute nervous fit, and was rescued at last by a good Samaritan in the shape of a comely lady who was at the hotel with her *fiancé*, a London merchant who was an Alsatian and ground his teeth when he talked of Germany. He looked like a wholesome English squire and she like a horse-loving, dog-loving English country lady; and one came back from the shivering evergreens outside the window at breakfast-time, to wonder about their relationship, since they had all meals together and spent their days together, yet greeted each other at the breakfast table as newly met.

To that good Samaritan who answered the piteous appeal at her bedroom door and came forth and comforted the victim of nerves: to those two who played with me a surreptitious game of cards in their private sitting-room while all St. Leonards went to church, and so drew the victim of nerves out of the slough, all thanksgiving! The Alsatian had some good stories: they were of kings and courts; where they bordered on the slightly *risqué*—he was a gentleman, and they were never more than that—he prefaced them by the statement that he told them because of the *finesse* involved, while his English sweetheart grew a little red and fidgeted.

They were not in our orbit. We never saw them again. But wherever they are I wish them all good things for the service rendered "by the way."

Then again there was the lonely man, a retired official of some kind, who lived at his club and came into the hotel for breakfast. We had talked of many things; he was a man of the world, with something of the great world. One could imagine that the wave had flung him somewhat high and dry in the club life at St. Leonards. We had even arrived at a common knowledge of Irish persons and places, without names being exchanged. He had got to the point of asking our names when, as he came into breakfast one morning, he met us in the hall, departing. Such a blankness overfell his face!

There is a fascination about these unknown friends with whom one touches an instant and never again. Ten to one if you follow up a hotel acquaintanceship it proves unsatisfactory and fizzles out. Of many such I have kept not one. But there is something fascinating in provoking interest and curiosity, in just touching a kinship of spirit and then disappearing into the void for evermore. You know that long after they will remember you and ask: "Who could it have been?"

Well—all's well that ends well, and there were no ill-results from the visit to St. Leonards, despite the anguish of the journey up to Town, when the cold light from the snow fell on the face of the invalid on whose behalf the journey was undertaken, and the other one thought that she saw death there.

The third, dearest holiday—I leave out the many visits to Ireland, which, being familiar, left no such sharp impressions—came at a time when the Crescent and Notting Hill were more than ever unendurable to the spirit. We had made more than one attempt to let the house, so as to get away for a long time without having to pay two house-rents. There is nothing so embittering, so destructive of illusions, as trying to let a house. You discover perhaps for the first time how deceitful is human nature. The hypocrites who profess themselves delighted with all they see, who just go home to report formally to their husbands, or who must see another house on their list because they have promised to, although it is the merest formality after seeing yours! These are precisely the ones you never hear from again. The business proposition is much more likely to come from the one who eyes you with a furtive suspicion and is reticent when you display your most tempting baits.

The first time we tried to let we felt the ignominy of it badly. The displaying of our household gods to the unsympathetic, the belittling eye, the obvious cold disbelief when you explained that you had not a carpet on your bedroom floor because you did not like carpets, the silence when you suggested the advantage of a view or an aspect; the iron of these things had entered into our souls. Once—before we had become hardened—we could not endure it any longer; we had our feelings; we resolved that no one else should see the house. After that resolve the likely ones began to come thick and fast. Since we had determined never again to expose our sacred things to the cold and critical gaze, we stuck to our determination, although, during the week or two before we closed up the house and went away, several people came whose one desire and object in life was to take our house. We said we were sick of showing the house and would not let it at all; and people felt aggrieved. In fact we departed in the midst of a storm—a lady who had come forty miles to see the house denouncing us on our own doorstep for such conduct as she had never heard of before, and hoped never to hear of again.

That was in the days of our freedom when it was easy to go away and lock up the house. Our great need of escape came soon after the visit to St. Leonards. The Crescent had become insupportable. The children did not thrive. The elder baby had been ill, and the younger baby showed signs of following his two brothers, the loss of whom had so saddened our early married life. Spring began to come to the Crescent, but a Spring saddened by thronging fears and anxieties. Could we get the baby away to the country? asked the sympathetic young doctor, who was in partnership with Henry Huxley, to whom this page must offer tribute. Henry Huxley was in my experience the most valuable thing a doctor can be. He was a tower of strength. His confidence was magnificent to a trembling soul. How often I have entered his door with a heart as heavy as lead for someone dear to me, and have emerged with a heart as light as a feather! May it be remembered to him!

Well—it meant moving a small household this time, a quite different thing from the time when we were only two. Still we made up our minds to go—to shut up the house if we must. The longing for deep country was at this time a constant suffering. The town was uglier than ever, and the noise of the barrel organs and the 'buses made an element in the general sickliness of things. There was a man who used to sing "The Bonny, Bonny Banks of Loch Lomond" in the Crescent at night in a very fine tenor voice. I have never heard the tune since without a mist of sickliness enveloping me.

We used to take the babies—I and the nurses—to Wormwood Scrubbs—that bitterly-named London open space, with the prison at its heart; the very words are acrid in the mouth. If you could escape the school-children from the Potteries by going in the forenoon there was certainly a wide space; far away there were trees and a hedgerow—a suggestion of fields and the country. We were rather pleased with Wormwood Scrubbs. If you sat with your back to the railway-line you could see no houses, and we used to make believe we looked on country—a Wormwood Scrubby sort of country, associated with a murder and a prison, but still country. We said we heard larks there—perhaps we did; we certainly believed we did, although Francis Thompson in captious mood burst into my flowery description of the Scrubbs by saying he did not believe there were any larks, that he had only seen the Scrubbs from the train, but that glimpse persuaded him it was a loathsome place—and so blew upon my roseate bubble.

Still, I thank the Scrubbs because it was a very wide, open space; and there might be anything at all at the further side of it, especially for the purblind. But at best it was only an anodyne.

Then—oh, the kindness of—Someone! In walked a pretty young lady but newly-married, one fine day, and in the gayest, lightest way in the world *took the house for a year!*

We left London a day of early May: babies, nurses, prams, beds, baskets, trunks—the impedimenta were upon us.

We left a disconsolate Lionel Johnson sighing for Paudeen and turned our faces Kentwards. We had such a glorious, abundant holiday before us that we did not yet look too far ahead. Our first step was a Kentish farmhouse which had been discovered for us by Walter Jerrold, who was living in those parts.

We travelled in a close-packed station fly from Hayes Station, and were put down in a deep valley to climb the hill to the farmhouse which was like a high wall for steepness. It was a struggle for any horse to get up it, even relieved of so much of his load. It was a cold, clear evening, and everything was wearing the first intense greenness of May. The silence—oh, the blessed silence! Not a sound anywhere but the songs of the birds! It was a silence on which one's heart rested as on a bed; one felt as though one never could have enough of the blessed deep silence and the cold, clean sweetness of the air.

The farmhouse was charming. It has appeared in many a novel of mine since. It was a small manor-house of the late seventeenth century, rows of long windows in the mellowed red brick, most peaceful and kindly to look upon. Within it had a noble staircase. It had stately bedrooms. The one we slept in had a powdering closet, and the original Dutch tiles were in the grates. A closet corresponding to the powdering closet with a long window overlooking the valley was on the other side of the fireplace.

But the glory of the house was its great dining hall, or kitchen, as our hosts called it. It was exactly as it had been in the days of Queen Anne. It was oak-panelled all round, with deep windows, and the panels were full of little cupboards. Round the walls were long oaken tables and settles fixed against the wall, genuinely dark and polished by the elbows and backs of many generations. The fireplace was as large as a small room. There were two seats within it, at either side the fire. The dogs were there, and above there was a maze of racks and hooks and cupboards and what not, the uses of which one could only guess at. Whips, guns, spurs, pipes, snuff, tobacco ; there were places for these and more. But the great beauty was the screen of oak fixed at one side of the fireplace, reaching from floor to roof, hinged, and so delicately adjusted that a small child could send it this way and that.

The room had the ordered beauty of a college hall, with a greater homeliness. It was a delight to eat there.

Our hosts did not correspond with the house. They were Londoners, as so often happens at a farm near London. But nothing could take away from the peace and the heavenly silence.

We used to go to the Jerrolds of evenings, across the valley, through a wonderful wood which clothed the side of the steep valley that was a ravine between two hills. One night as we came homeward we were aware of something that flew with us, with low calls, from bush to bush of the roadside hedge, going with us steadily all the way. We left the frequented road and descended into the ravine, where were a few farm-buildings. The track across the valley led to nowhere but our farm, and it was eerie to one coming from London and with London nerves. The ghostly birds fled with us all the way. Till—where three tall trees stood up in the valley they left us ; and there began—the song of the nightingale ! Oh, how heavenly it was ! The dark valley, and the moon rising over the further hill, and the scent of the May in the air, and the nightingales—after the Crescent and the Scrubbs, and the imaginary larks. Yes, I am sure now that Francis Thompson was right and there were no larks. Yet at Ealing they used to be a tangle in the air, even on a day of green east wind, and there was only Acton between the Scrubbs and Ealing.

We hung enraptured from our window over the valley listening to the nightingales as they answered others on the far hill. Every night while we remained at the farm as we returned from seeing the Jerrolds the unseen birds came with us. Their song waited for us. If we left at 10 they were with us; if we stayed till 11 they waited for us. Is that gregariousness of the nightingale—under cover of the darkness—a common thing? It has not happened to us elsewhere.

As we went up to the farmhouse between the grassy banks and hedgerows the glow-worms, of which that country was full, kept lighting and extinguishing and lighting again their little greenish lamps. I discovered one morning that the bird who called the birds was Cuckoo. He shouted just before the dawn of day and the chorus began. We had not been there a week before there was colour in the cheek of the baby who had seemed in London to be slipping through one's helpless fingers. A day or two later we were sure. He had turned back to the sun.

Then, one enchanting June day, we all tramped across the valley, with bag and baggage, to an old, old, old labourer's cottage which we had quite to ourselves all that happy summer. I can remember now the first meal we had there and the happy excitement of setting in order. It had been lived in by an artist, and her pictures were all over the white-washed walls. It had been added on to. There was a dining-room, an extra bedroom, a kitchen, some civilisations. Outside there were outhouses—one, to our delight, a sort of washhouse-kitchen, where meals could be prepared in the hot Summer without filling the little house with the heat and odour of cooking. We had brought with us a cook who had French blood and a gipsy look. She adored the country and the babies; and the contrivances and ingenuities that were to make life easy were a delight to her. She had the true spirit of adventure.

I can remember going to bed for the first time in the lavender-scented sheets in the old cottage room. Next morning about half-past three, the sun shone through a lilac tree and looked me straight in the eyes. It was felicity. It never ceased to be felicity all that happy summer.

Across the road from us was an estate which had been bought by a Canadian for the purpose of a stud-farm. He bred racers. Opposite the low cottage-windows were the foals—exquisite leggy young things, shy and gentle, yet very friendly. There were the mares, too, in another field, but they were not at all so simple a matter. The fields were enclosed by high fences, through the bars of which the beauteous young things would put their silken heads and allow you to fondle them.

That Canadian—with a North of Ireland name—must often have cursed the good old English institution of the right of way. His stud-farm was crossed and recrossed by rights of way. We once saw a stupid village woman strike one of the beautiful little foals who had come up with a friendly intention, on his silken muzzle too, with a heavy hard stick. Now and again some fool or fools from London, which was only eighteen miles distant as the crow flies—bean-feasts on Saturdays were the fly in our ointment that Summer—would think it rare sport to frighten the foals. We loved them as though we owned them, and we did our best to protect them, knowing how easily the slender legs might be broken.

After one or two thundery days in June the weather made up its mind. It was a decade when the Summers broke one record after another for fine weather—we were to make up for it in the next decade—and 1899 was a gorgeous summer. It was a summer of magnificent sunsets, influenced by the lava-dust from some great earthquakes and eruptions in the East. It was a great strawberry summer, and we were in the midst of strawberries. The sun beat down on the cottage all day and never reached its inner coolness. But by this time I had learnt to work out of doors whenever the weather permitted. There was a coppice just across the road opposite the field of the little foals; and there was not a corner of the cottage garden where the sun did not find me.

One day I took my chair, my footstool, my pen and ink, writing pad and paper, and went across the road to the coppice. It was so hot that to cross the road in the bright sunshine was an ordeal. One had to close one's eyes from the scintillating steeliness which was the atmosphere.

The coppice was thick with undergrowth. I found a way in and established myself in a clear space. After a time came the babies. Their nurse, a little Londoner who had the shy, bright ways of a squirrel or a bird and was a born nurse, used to put a blanket and a pillow on the grass and lay the babies there to sleep the morning hours away while she was busy indoors. How they slept! And how they awoke and ate and slept again and were placid as only thriving babies are!

I wrote two books in that delicious wood. After a preliminary difficulty with the owner, who thought our neighbourhood might alarm the foals, a soft answer and a plea for the babies melted the good man's heart and he made us free of the coppice. At first I was afraid of snakes. It was the chalk country, where snakes are common. We had come on an adder basking in the hot sun on the path which ran down by the side of the wood to that dry shelf of the valley where wild thyme fell to dust in the sun. There was a pond beyond our garden reported to be infested by snakes. I never saw one in the wood ; it was all gentle.

The trees met high overhead, so that a shower pattered above you as on a roof ; but there were few showers that summer. There was the usual cry of a water famine, and once a thunderstorm burst from a green sky and we thought the splendid summer was over ; but it came back again and persisted. I used to sit and write ; and scraps of conversation from the cyclists who whirred by came to me in an odd patchwork. I cannot remember a single motor that summer, so I suppose they were still *rara aves*.

One day some smart, finely-dressed ladies drove over from Beckenham, came into the coppice and had tea, and afterwards strolled about, sending me curious glances where I sat writing, the faithful Paudeen at my feet, in the little glade.

A few days later they came again. One had dropped a diamond brooch on her last visit. It was the world coming into Arcady. She asked me if I had seen it. If she was suspicious of my answer she did not show it. After all, we were but cottage people. She said languidly that it was a brooch she did not care for ; and another lady responded sharply that it had cost two hundred and forty pounds. They had all but given up the search when they espied it, glittering, caught on a thorn.

Another day came an old man—a very unusual old man. He accosted me as I was crossing the road to the wood. " Madam," he said, lifting his ragged hat-brim, " would you be so kind as to give me a cup of tea ? "

We had locked up the cottage. The whole party was going afield, through the woods and by the field paths, to the post office out of a fairy-tale which hid itself away in a green lane. The master of the house was away. We were all women and babies and a small dog.

I looked at the key of the door dangling from the cook's finger; then back at the old fine face, at the blue eyes that met mine with so steady, so commanding a gaze. Here was a broken gentleman obviously. But how came he to such a pass? His rags were deplorable. The white skin, like the skin of youth, showed through a tatter. Drink, dissipation—no, there was no associating them with the handsome, firm, well-coloured face. A philosopher, perhaps, a mystic. An Irish peasant might have taken him for St. Joseph, who used to appear to an old woman of my acquaintance dressed in "lovely black broadcloth, a tall hat that the shine of it 'ud take the light out of your eyes, and the beautifullest white shirt buzzum, that never was starched on earth."

Our apparition drank his tea like a gentleman, and thanked us with the greatest courtesy. He confessed that he had one desire in the world—an old towel, a piece of soap, a clean shirt, no matter how old, and a pocket-handkerchief. We offered him a wash. "Madam," he said, "the waters of the spring are sufficient for my ablutions." He certainly did look like an old-fashioned actor. We gave him what he coveted, plus a suit of clothes, a pair of boots, and sixpence, and he went off with a remark about the fortunes of war and the wounded in the battle of life. We never saw him again.

The suit of clothes, we discovered later on, had a sentimental value for the original owner, who, it appeared, had worn them on his wedding day. He said it showed the hard unimaginativeness of woman to give them away.

He said also that the boots were his only pair ; but that I do not believe : they may have been his most comfortable. His slighting remarks about our visitor could not have been made, I am sure, if he had seen him.

Other visitors—well, now and again someone came to the back door with a hare or a brace of rabbits, which the cook acquired at a ridiculous price. We slept on the ground floor with a wide open window—we slept so even when there was no male protector : what had become of the London nerves ?—and my small votive lamp used to bring in the night-moths and tramping men and casual labourers at 3 or 4 in the morning, to ask the way or a light for a pipe or some other such friendly thing. They thought the little light was the light of the early-rising labouring man.

It was a wonderful Summer. As I think and write the sweetness of it rises to me like the fragrance of long dead roses. Such happy well-being for everyone. The baby who had been prescribed fresh country air was, when autumn came, too heavy to be weighed in any scale we could find, and he rollicked like a sandboy or a jolly Jack Tar.

That was indeed the best of holidays.

CHAPTER XVI

1899—1900

SOMETHING did really happen in the autumn of that year to break up the æsthetics of the 'nineties. It was the South African War.

It had begun to be talked of before we left Westerham Hill, now, alas, a *congerie* of small houses. War was declared, I think, about the 12th of October. By that time we were on our way to spend the Winter in Ireland, in a house full of beautiful furniture, seated on a rock jutting right out into Dublin Bay.

I am amazed to find that my diary for that period contains not a single allusion to the war. I don't think we took it very seriously at first. Various youths we knew were going off in the Irish Hunt Contingent. Every man who had a tuberculous tendency was going out. For a month or two the thing was a picnic. Then came the dark days of December—very dark in England: a Londoner wrote to us that men did not speak when they met, but nodded; that a carriage full of City men, coming up to town of mornings, unfolded their papers and stared at what confronted them without speaking. Englishmen were digesting as best they might the ugly fact that invincible England was getting the worst of it.

Atmospherically it was not at all black with us in Ireland. It was a benign winter, such a winter as often comes to the Eastern seaboard of Ireland. The sun was warm, the wind blew gently; the bluest of bays was cut into a million facets of dazzling light; the waves broke on the sands with the softest ripples and murmurs.

I remember on Christmas morning going to the post office to see the latest news posted up. Afterwards we sat in a garden, among the rocks, overlooking the Bay and the mountains, and basked in the warm sun. A little boy swaggered up and down in toy armour, waving a Union Jack. It was the one note of war in the quiet, beautiful morning, soundless save for the breaking of the waves below us and the scream of a sea-bird.

That far-off war disturbed little the course of life round about us in those days. It was an unpopular war with the Irish people. Dublin then was a very different place from what it is in these days of the Great War. There were few indications that a war was going on. The very first time I saw khaki—I believed we called it " kharki " then—it was worn by a youth at Kingstown Station. Everyone stared at him and he seemed acutely conscious of his position. We had lived long enough in England to be concerned for the success of British arms, but one had no such impulse as one has now to hug the man in khaki, or at least to give him a warm handshake and a blessing.

The other day a handsome, refined-looking young R.A.M.C. man sat bolt upright in a Dublin tramcar. Everyone looked affectionately at him. A little girl presented him with a box of chocolates which had just been given to herself. An old fellow in the corner, obviously an old soldier, leant out and said : " It's well to be you." " Why so ? " asked the other, blushing shyly. " Well, when I came home in 1882 after putting in my time in India I was kicked about the streets of Dublin, so I was, like a football. And here are you, everybody's pal and the pet of the ladies."

We looked at khaki in those days in a detached way. I heard a woman in the street say one day—it was the time of Modder River and the other calamities—" The min is good an' the ginerals is good : but the tic-tacs was all wrong." The soldiers had not yet quite ceased to be *vauriens* and wastrels in the minds of the common people. Yet the Irish regiments were doing splendidly then as they are doing to-day, only with far less dreadful things to face.

Queen Victoria's visit in the April of 1900 was taken as an *amende* for her long coldness to Ireland—a coldness softened and broken up by the bravery of the Irish troops in South Africa. I had spent most of the winter on a heart-breaking job, undertaken gaily, with no appreciation of the labour it would involve. I had to revise a Cyclopædic Cabinet of Irish Literature in four large volumes, to bring it up to date by adding a volume of new writers, then to compress the whole into four volumes.

The stereos were to be preserved as far as possible—so that if I took out three lines on a page I had to put three lines in their place. I did it in three months. Anyone else would have taken three years or a lifetime. I have not really explained the difficulties. Indeed, I've forgotten them ; but I can from this detached distance see myself sitting at a table, holding my head on with both hands. Perhaps that Cabinet kept me from thinking overmuch of the war. It was the only writing thing I ever undertook over which I had moments of black despair.

I made a very good fourth volume in the result, but it did not please everyone. My publishers did not like my exclusion of some few writers I thought unsuited to the Irish households which would purchase the monumental work. Mr. George Moore was one of these. I said that I could not really find a suitable passage. The publishers offered me " Esther Waters " and " Sister Teresa." I was obdurate. At last I compromised on a passage from a play. Mr. Moore did not like my selection—I rather fancy there had been collaboration—and wrote me a thunderous letter about the law of copyright. I explained that he owed his inclusion to the publisher and heard no more.

Another playwright, Mr. G. B. Shaw, was very amiable, although he would address me on the envelope as "Katharine Tynan," and begin his letters "Dear Katharine Tynan."

I left out one Irish novelist for an incivility he had shown to Mr. Parnell in his last sad days. I did not give that reason to my publishers.

Another writer—a lady—told me the year of her birth, adding, "Though I tell it, it would be nice if you did not mention it. You see I'm getting on." This touched me oddly. She was a very pretty woman with eyes and hair of the liver colour you see in a Clumber spaniel. Of course I suppressed the date.

From our rock we had a splendid view of the warships in the Bay for the Queen's visit. The Queen's yacht glided in almost unnoticed one afternoon. It was some little time before the roar of the guns told the good citizens of Dublin that the Queen had arrived. The yacht came in in light rain, and so quietly that we, watching from our rock, were puzzled as to whether this could be the great arrival. Some gilding about the yacht persuaded us that it was.

While the Queen stayed—and indeed before, for the Fleet waited for her in the Bay—we had the strange and lovely sight every night of the illumination of the ships. Nothing could be more fairy-like. There was no gradual lighting to prepare one for the beauty. Suddenly against the darkness swung the fairy ships, every mast outlined in fire, glittering in the night. They shone there in unimaginable delicacy of beauty. The great searchlights from the ships roamed over the land, penetrating the quiet places, waking the birds to false dawn. The night the old Queen slept in the harbour the spectacle was over very early so that she might sleep in peace.

She entered Dublin the next day. We saw her from a stand in front of the Provost's House at Trinity College, by courtesy of our friend Robert Yelverton Tyrrell. She looked very old and feeble sunk down in the carriage, and very, very small and cold. It was a brisk April day, and she had driven from Kingstown in an open carriage. It was a visit of reconciliation. The people took it in that sense and welcomed her. She was really pathetic this old, old mother of her people. People said that the South African War had broken her heart. How would she have endured the War of 1914—15—?—?

The populace was very much interested in the donkey-carriage which came with her so that she might have her usual outings in her own way. An old woman I knew met it as it was being driven from the North Wall to the Viceregal Lodge.

"I'm the luckiest old woman alive," she said. "I was just comin' back from berryin' my last son-in-law at Glasnevin, an' I haven't one to earn a penny for me, and the daughter's left with nine childher; but sure, wasn't I lucky anyhow? I seen the Queen's little asses."

At this time we were all thinking of Mafeking, which was besieged by the Boers. There was also Ladysmith, and there was Kimberley. I do not propose to tell the history of the South African War, but only to record a few personal memories of it. We were back in London for Mafeking night, when London went mad and added a new word to the easy vocabulary of the people. "To Maffick" is not yet fully accepted as a dictionary word, but will be, doubtless, in time.

There was great anxiety about Mafeking. We were sitting in the small front room at the Crescent which my husband used as a work and smoking-room, when, suddenly, out of the darkness and quietness of the night, came a voice—the voice of one who ran. It was as though someone ran with a torch. The voice was crying " Mafeking is Relieved ! "

We rushed out into the street. The voice had gone on waking up other quiet crescents and squares. But someone, a legislator, was ascending the steps of the next house.

" It is quite true," he said breathlessly. " I have just come from the House of Commons."

Then suddenly in the main road the indescribable noise broke out. It went on all night—London making carnival. The sober Briton had lost his seven senses for once. It was a night in which staid, church-going citizens danced on the pavement or in the roadway : when they hugged promiscuous strangers : when the wildest revels of Hampstead Heath on Bank Holiday were enacted all over London by respectable fathers of families : when high-minded and honourable persons were decorated with peacock's feathers and learned the use of " the ladies' tormentor " !

London was ashamed of itself in a day or two. A good many people must have had " heads " next day, even if they had not indulged in strong drink. It was an orgy. Men asked themselves the next day how it could have happened. London had " Mafficked "—might " Maffick " again on occasion. It was the reaction from the Black Week—that week in December of Magersfontein, Stormberg and Colenso—the weeks since in which things had been going as fatally ill for the British arms as could well be imagined.

Our four years at the Crescent were nearly up. We have always been generous in giving our landlords a generous release of a month or two of a term—because we were always impatient to be off. We had hankered after Ealing. We went back there. The Crescent had been dreadful after the shining and sparkling cleanness of our house on the rock overlooking Dublin Bay. We had been at the Crescent long enough after our return to make Ealing freshly delightful. It was the time of roses; and Ealing is a place of roses. The houses were covered up in roses the day we returned. I remember the dear delight of looking from an upper window and seeing roses everywhere. The garden was prairie, but there were roses in the prairie grass. We cleared a space for the babies. The eldest one immediately dubbed the garden "The clean garden": we had eggs and butter with our tea which we fondly thought ever so much better than what one could get at Notting Hill.

There was a country cleanness and sweetness and silence about the first night at Ealing, even though one's bed behaved like an earthquake because of the passage of the Great Western trains. In a little time we had the garden tidied up. There was a bed of magnificent Shirley poppies just bursting to bloom. There were many standard roses. There was a row of young fruit trees at the end of the garden which bore well. Behind them was a gate leading into a little private road between the gardens of two rows of houses. When the trees of the private road were in leaf you did not suspect the other houses.

To be sure there were houses alongside of you with other boxes of gardens. Our house was the second last in the row, which was a short one, so that the houses which ran at right angles to our row were also far distant, and we had the benefit of their garden space. We had really some lovely things in that little garden at Ealing. The beautiful forest trees of Castle-Bar Hill were full in our sight, and we had all their birds. We had a big plane tree in our own garden. We had the leafing and waning of the chestnut trees in the private road. There was one quite lovely thing. A chestnut tree in the private road had a street lamp standing right up into its branches. That tree in May and June was a wonder. Someone ought to have painted it, the softly burning bush of green flame. The children used to see it from the nursery window in winter when the lamps were early lit and they watched for the lamp-lighter. They were asleep when it was at its most beautiful.

I worked in that garden a great deal. When the Meynells paid their first visit Alice Meynell stood clear of the plane tree and looked up. "Oh, K.T.," she said, "you have sky!" As she stood looking upwards I thought I saw her dear, beautiful soul. Wilfred said: "But, K.T., there is a dragon-fly! Have you dragon-flies at Ealing?" Shortly afterwards I found in a gooseberry bush the dry husk of a dragon-fly, the jewels still shining in the wings. I suppose it must have been the very last dragon-fly. I never saw another.

Our return to Ealing was not without its sensation. From the time we returned from Ireland Paudeen had been under police supervision. It was the time when Mr. Long was engaged in stamping out hydrophobia and the regulations were very stringent. We had received a permit for Paudeen to be moved from Ireland to the Crescent, with the understanding that the Crescent was to be his place of abode for six months.

We imagined that there would be no difficulty about removing him to Ealing when we moved, but there we found we were mistaken. A request for a permit of transfer was refused. The dog must stay where he was for six months. The fact that we were leaving the house empty did not affect the official mind. The permit said six months, and six months it should be.

While we stayed at the Crescent, once or twice a week a policeman used to call to see that Paudeen was still there. Paudeen being produced, the policeman would refer to a document, pat the small grey head—the man was not born who could resist Paudeen—say "That's 'im, right enough"—and "You'll excuse me, mum, for doing my dooty. Not that the likes of 'im could 'arm a fly. But dooty's dooty."

Aided and abetted by the Crescent generally, we resolved to defy the law. Being Irish, it was easier for us. We had various offers of hospitality for Paudeen from ladies willing to go to prison in defence of the dog, but knowing, or thinking we knew, Paudeen's inalienable heart, we decided to stand by the dog. I should say that there had been a correspondence with the Department conducted with great spirit on our side. It was perhaps no wonder that the officials were unreasonable.

Our case by this time had been taken up by a League. One of us attended a meeting of ladies, mostly duchesses, and had compliments paid to his heroism which he should have blushed to receive. Contrariwise, the remarks made about Mr. Long will not bear repetition.

We carried Paudeen off in a cab under the nose of lurking police, or so the ladies of the Crescent imagined. No one meddled with us, however, and we conveyed the tiny person of Paudeen safely to our new habitation.

The following Sunday a policeman knocked at our door. We had already decided that the best course to adopt was to place the dog in the care of a veterinary surgeon we were sure of till the time of his quarantine should be up. The policeman—we called him Sergeant, as you are always expected to do in Ireland—asked to see the Irish terrier which we kept on the premises in contravention of the law. Paudeen was produced. The Sergeant snorted indignantly as he looked at him.

Paudeen, wearing the pathetic air he knew how to assume, was irresistible. "Irish terrier!" said the Sergeant; "W'y 'e ain't no more Irish terrier 'n I am." He then stroked Paudeen's head as he listened to the facts of the case. When he had heard, "Wot's the meanin' o' this?" he asked, while his eyes bulged. "Leave 'im shut up in an empty 'ouse! W'y there ain't no common sense in it."

We took the prisoner sorrowfully that afternoon and handed him over to his jailor. The vet.'s premises had something of the prettiness of an old inn. There were stables and kennels on three sides of a square. The fourth side was taken up by a toy house of the kind that children love. A little green hall door with a brass knocker, a balcony above. Three upper windows; one window each side the hall door. Window boxes, white curtains: everything so spick and span that you rubbed your eyes for the unreality of it. We handed Paudeen over to the vet. and turned away with tears in our eyes, not daring to look back.

We were to come in a few days' time and take him for a walk. It was illegal, but we were not in a mind to be bound by the technicalities, nor was the kind little vet. "You leave him alone for a day or two till he gets used to my Missus," said he. "My Missus, she has a way with dogs."

The intervening days and nights were haunted by thoughts and dreams of the absurd small prisoner who had looked so wistful behind the bars of his muzzle. We fancied we heard his piteous howling through the noise of the traffic. I can say for myself that I watered my bread with my tears.

Meanwhile the League was up and doing. Though disappointed that we had not gone to prison, the duchesses did not desert us. They issued a moving statement of what they called "the Ealing case"—the other Ealing case was out of it for the moment—which they sent to every paper in the three kingdoms. Members of Parliament were interested. We were the recipients of a great deal of sympathy from the warm-hearted public. If we had only gone to prison, the League said, there would have been a great upheaval that would have cast down the man Long from his post of tyranny for evermore.

In the midst of the pother the sympathetic vet. called and, quite contrary to the law, handed us over Paudeen for a brief visit. We promised to bring him back in a few hours' time.

When he had gone we had time to discover that Paudeen was oddly *distrait*. Only that it was impossible, we should have thought that, after the manner of Codger, we bored him to extinction. He showed no pleasure at seeing us, although when we reproached him he wagged his enormous tail by way of protest. His eyes looked past us through us. He was not the loving dog who had left us a few days earlier.

We made up our minds that he was distraught by his separation from us, by the nights and days of lonely misery and alarm he must have suffered.

After lunch we set out to take him back to prison. He was leashed and muzzled. He was usually a reasonable dog, but during that journey he strained at his leash as though he were a hound in sight of the quarry.

Coming near the prison we let him off the leash. He disappeared like a flash of lightning, straight in at the prison door. When we followed he was scratching with all his might at the hall door of the toy house. We were just in time to see the door open to admit and close behind him.

The vet. came to meet us. He looked pleased.

"That there little dog o' yours," he said, " He has taken to my Missus! Just you wait a minit. These 'ere dogs, they are jealous of my Missus—I've never seen her so taken up with a dog before as that little one of yours. She'll take it hard when the time comes to part, as the sayin' is."

A tremendous howling of dogs broke out. Those who were loose about the yard flung themselves into attitudes of excessive suffering. The dogs in the kennels and the loose boxes were tearing at their barriers, uttering howls of anguish the while.

We looked up for the cause of the jealous anguish. Into the little flower-edged balcony a comfortable looking young woman of the round, soft, milk-and-roses kind had stepped. She stood a second looking down on the pain she created, with the air of a great popular favourite who comes to the edge of her opera-box to acknowledge an ovation.

In the young woman's arms was Paudeen, obviously in bliss. A little whippet leaped up on the rail of the balcony and stood looking down, quivering with excitement. Paudeen uttered an ecstatic yelp.

" Between my Missus and Nellie," said the vet.; " —pretty thing Nellie, isn't she?—that little dog o' yours, '*e* won't feel the time pass."

Meanwhile the great heart of England was being stirred up and harrowed for the unnecessary suffering inflicted on a pet dog and his owners. At last, Mr. Redmond kindly intervened. Paudeen was restored to us on condition that the remainder of the quarantine was spent at our new residence. He came back. We magnanimously agreed to ignore the episode of the Missus and Nellie. Indeed, a little later, meeting them one day, they had to recall themselves to Paudeen's memory. He yawned, looking beyond them as he had done with us on that day of our disillusionment.

The war was dragging out its course. One day in July, sitting under the plane tree in the garden, I heard that Jim Alderson was dead. He had been wounded at Bethlehem by a party of Boers, with some of whom he had sat up the night before in a farmhouse talking of many things, on most amicable terms. His last letter, written after they had left him, wondered at the fatuity of war, and with good fellows such as these were. He was carried down in a bullock wagon to the base hospital with seven wounds in his body, suffering what must have been great agony from the jolting of the bullock wagon and the rough roads. A little account of Jim Alderson appears in my " Twenty-Five Years." He has been to me the ideal of a brave, clean, and simple soldier. I am glad that it is to his regiment, the Royal Irish, my young son goes to-day.

Queen Victoria wrote with her own hand to the parents, wives, or near relatives of every officer killed in action. I saw her letter to Jim Alderson's mother, and remember it as something very personal, simple and womanly, which brought great comfort to the recipient. She had great qualities, the old Queen ; and in their hour of grief she was the Mother of her people, who in return gave her an affection, a reverence, a devotion, which had a deal of poetry in them. " *Our* Queen," the English used to say with a proud possessive air. There was something about her of the Divine Right, of the great days. Probably no monarch since the Stuarts received so much personal loyalty and deep attachment.

CHAPTER XVII

MR. GEORGE WYNDHAM

SOME TIME in November, 1900, I find the entry in my diary, "Letter, Mr. Wyndham"; and a day later, "Wrote to Mr. Wyndham"; and again, "Letter, Mr. Wyndham." These bare entries have relation to one of the most golden happenings of my life. I had come into personal touch with the one who to me stood for so much romance: who was half Lord Edward and half his gracious, charming self to me then and to the end. And these were not his first letters by any manner of means.

I had been writing something about him in the *Pall Mall*. What it was I have long ago forgotten. My diary is a mere bald statement of doings; but I believe the occasion was his transfer from the War Office to the Irish Secretaryship. Oddly enough his bewitching collateral, Lady Sarah Lennox, had had a desire to be Madame la Secrétaire, and had intrigued, if one can speak of intrigue in the case of anything so frank, to obtain the post for her husband, Sir Charles Bunbury, without success.

What is it in the case of certain men which makes their plain "Mr." prouder than any title? It is so especially with statesmen—Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. Canning, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Balfour. For these to be anything else than "Mr." is inconceivable. It is a case of "King I could not be: prince I would not be. I am De Rohan."

So mysteriously one always thinks of *Mr.* Wyndham.

The simple title of the commoner, shared with the whole world of men, assumes its own pride and its own beauty in his case. The sounding titles could give him nothing.

He was out of his due time and place in nineteenth and twentieth-century England. He belonged to a more romantic age. The spacious days would not have misbecome his charming personality, his gifts of imagination and poetry, his courtesy, his graciousness, his spirit and gaiety, his beautiful presence.

The first word I heard of him that gave me a mental picture was some time in the middle 'nineties when Mrs. Meynell told me that she had been at W. E. Henley's house, 9, The Terrace, Barnes, to see the Boat Race. She said: "Oh, K. T., the most elegant man in England was carrying trays of ices and tea and cakes up and down the stairs!" I caught the impression at once which was to be confirmed in many ways and days—an impression of something kind, beautiful, gracious, and young.

We were all then of Henley's disciples, all writing for the *National Observer*. Mr. Wyndham too was of the disciples, sitting at the feet of the maimed genius, with the massive head and body, of whom I think every time I pass in and out of a certain great Irish country-house which is decked with spoils from the Acropolis. There is a great torso there which is Henley to the life—Rodin's Henley.

Mr. Wyndham, at that time, was at the parting of the ways. He had not yet decided on a political career, although he had been with Mr. Balfour when he was Chief Secretary of Ireland some years earlier. One can imagine how delighted he was with the Irish life—so richly coloured, so unexpected, so whimsical, so dramatic. How fresh and vivid it appears after the routine of English life! Ireland lays her spells upon English statesmen. An English official in Ireland, closely associated with Mr. Wyndham in his Irish career, interrupted me the other day when I was speaking of Mr. Wyndham's love of Ireland. "It is nothing," he said; "it is the fate of every Englishman who comes over here. Look at So-and-So, and So-and-So," instancing men whom Ireland must have wooed before she won them, for they would have come with no prepossession in her favour.

Fortunately for Ireland, if not for himself, Mr. Wyndham decided on a political and not a literary career. The Irish life, full of hard work—for the two Land Bills exacted an immense amount of industry—had its alleviations of gaiety.

He did the hard work of his great Land Acts himself. Someone called in to advise has told me of his working night after night into the small hours, while the wife he adored sat up for him, or rather rested sleepily on a couch while she waited. It was his happiness to have this ideal companion always by his side. He produced his great Land Bill on the 25th of March, 1903, for the Annunciation of Our Lady—"and My Lady's Birthday." A great old Irish lady has told me of a meeting with Lady Grosvenor at some function or other. After they had talked a while Lady Grosvenor said, with an air of the most tender pride, "But have you seen my George? Oh, you must see my George." His was certainly an ideal marriage.

The most strenuous work would have been accomplished gaily by this vivacious and brilliant worker. Dublin was a place very much to his mind. He was immensely popular, as was Lord Dudley, who had the same faculty of doing hard work gaily. The Irish were very sensible of his beauty, his wit, his charm. His beautiful manners were prompted by a gentle and sensitive heart; and that, I think, is a necessity for the finest manners, although a veneer of fine manners may serve for a time. He delighted in doing fairy-tale things, in dropping a gift out of the air into the lap of some deserving person who had never dreamt what good fortune awaited him. A tale of some fine doing fired his heart, and he had to reward it so far as in him lay. People tell you many such stories. He noted with whimsical and affectionate enjoyment the oddities of the people. He remarked that when he asked " What is So-and-So ? " the answer invariably was that he was a Protestant or a Catholic, for such a question in Ireland is always taken as being concerned with a man's religion. Another time it was an assertive person who thrust advice upon him at his first coming. " You'll hear one story and another : this one will tell you this and that will tell you the other. Don't believe a word you hear. Just listen to me, Mr. Wyndham." One of his sayings was : " Never withdraw, never apologise : and if they talk of resignation hold on to the leg of the billiard table." Alas ! that he did not carry out the last gay precept in his own case.

He had the passion for Ireland common to his blood. Lady Sarah Lennox, who was Lord Edward Fitzgerald's aunt, and so bewitching a creature that one bleeds to think anything of spirit and fire such as she was should share the common lot of mortality, must have handed down to him many of her qualities. She was less fortunate than he who so closely resembled her, in that she lived to grow old and feeble and blind before her indomitable life flickered out. Such spirits as hers and his are not made to grow old, to be sad, to grope in darkness.

Lady Sarah adored Ireland, Celtic Ireland, Catholic Ireland, rebel Ireland. To the North of Ireland she was most femininely unjust. " The Bostonians," she says, writing at the time of the American War of Independence, " being chiefly Presbiterians and from the North of Ireland, are daily proved to be very, very bad people, being quarrelsome, discontented, hipocritical, enthusiastical, lying people."

The Irish, they say, have a need for a King. I used to say after Mr. Parnell's death that I had emptied myself of all the hero-worship I had to give. Since my heroes were dead some need in me went unfilled. So it was that after seven years without a hero I sent a volume of verse I had published in 1898 to Mr. Wyndham. I apologised for sending it—I am not one to send my books to those to whom I am personally unknown —by saying that it was because of the year and its association with Lord Edward that I ventured to send it. In reality I was attracted by the things I had heard of Mr. Wyndham, who seemed to me Lord Edward come to life again.

I do not know if I expected an acknowledgment: perhaps not. Anyhow it came: it lies under my hand —the first of many letters before *finis* was reached in 1913. I must plead the revelation of his charming kindness in the letter as an excuse for repeating his praises. Then and now I acknowledge the kindness. He had exquisite taste, and he would hardly have chosen a small achievement for praise; but, since it had sought him out, he brought to it what it lacked.

" 25th of August, '98.

" I do thank you for your book and for the underlying thought which prompted such a gift this year. I have read the poems and find in them what I most seek from Poetry—the Spirit of Delight. Your 'Wind in the Trees' is refreshing after a long session at Westminster. I am glad for all our sakes and for your own that you can write Spring Songs. We have too many songs of Autumn. It is high time that some singer should turn from the Beauty of decay to the Beauty of Birth. We need all the music from the Houses of Death and Birth."

The next letter I find is from the Chief Secretary's Lodge. It is dated December 4, 1901.

"Unlike the sands my *χαεμιτα* could be told as easily as my fingers. My trouble is that the fingers of one hand are almost needed to reckon the occasions on which you have given to me and I have not had the grace to say 'Thank you.' But I say it now with all my heart, for all the sunshine and shadow in your poems—for the Dedication,—it is Pindar, is it not?—for 'That Sweet Enemy' and for 'A Union of Hearts.' I nearly wrote to you to say that I bought 'A Union of Hearts' at one of W. H. Smith's bookstalls and read it with delight. Then you sent me another copy which I gave to my stepdaughter, Lettice, and she loved it. I do not know why I failed to write. The statement that I nearly did so may rank with that of the truthful boy who said 'I nearly saw a rabbit.' My excuse must be that you do not live in Ireland and that you ought to live there. Then the clue of your poetry would be a true one to your address. As it is I have to unearth it from *Who's Who* with a wish that you were looking, as I am now at the sun-gleam on the Dublin Mountains and the townships smouldering and glittering in the low blue shadow.

"I cannot thank you enough for the enchantment of your songs and the kindness which gives them to me."

I was by this time so much of "a True Blue Wyndham Person" that I had dedicated to him my "Collected Poems" at a moment when he was very much out of favour with the Nationalist Party, with some of whose members I had warm friendships dating from the old Parnell days. I remember one, Edmund Leamy—so much a poet at heart himself, that he must have understood and sympathised with me—taking down the volume from my shelves and glancing at the dedication with a half-humorous half-grim bending of the brows. I was very glad to do it at such a moment, perhaps even gladder because I had to bear the disapproval of some friends for doing it. I am gladder still to-day.

A letter dated St. Patrick's Day, 1904, says:—

"I thought of you on Monday when buying books at the sale of our common master, dear and great Henley, whom I loved and miss and deplore. Please do not think it impertinent of me to suggest that you ought to go to the Irish National Theatre Society's Plays on Sat. 26th at the Royalty."

The next letter I find was after his Irish *débacle*. It is dated May 17, 1905; and I quote from it passages which prove his sweetness and his magnanimity towards the country which had acquiesced in his being driven forth. "He has a very magnanimous heart," said someone who knew him most intimately, and the judgment was sound. He had hardly yet recovered from the crushing blow of his defeat in Ireland—a defeat humanly speaking, although his loyal self-sacrifice, his taking the responsibility so that others should not suffer, was, in the finer sense, not a defeat, but a victory.

"I am grateful to you for having written and for what you have written. I was glad to get your book and thought that perhaps you would write. And now we have only got to wait for the next chance of helping somebody, whoever he may be, to get something done. You must never for one moment allow yourself to believe that Ireland is unlucky or that she brings ill luck. It is because people allow themselves to believe this that things sometimes go wrong in Ireland, or rather that it is harder to get them right when they go wrong, in Ireland as elsewhere. The great thing is to be quite sure that—'All we have hoped and dreamed of good shall exist, not in its semblance but itself.' If enough people believe that a great many will live to see it. Your books help me to believe this. That is why I want you to go on writing books in the same vein of charity, and it is one of the reasons why I am

"Yours gratefully,

"GEORGE WYNDHAM."

Again there was a dedication—this time of my volume of poems, "Innocencies," which I chose to offer him at the moment to show my dissent from the policy that had put an end to his beneficent career in Ireland. Again he writes of the old days of the *National Observer* and Henley, when we used to feel it a pride and a distinction if our poetry or our prose passed the bar of judgment of that great critic and man of letters.

> "Under the pleasant grass the wise are lying
> And all the strong ones are gone over the sea,"

one sighs, remembering those days.

"House of Commons,
"4th July, 1905.

"My dear Mrs. Tynan Hinkson,—I shall be glad and proud to accept the dedication. I have always delighted in your poetry since old *National Observer* days. And I know that I shall enjoy the new novel. 'Many a green isle needs must be.' Not that I am at all miserable, but that I take a special delight in greenery and freshness and I find them in all that you write."

The next letter, dated Christmas Eve, 1905, acknowledges "Innocencies" and gives me something in return, very precious now as belonging to one who did so much, and abstained from so much that he must have done exquisitely.

"My dear Mrs. Katharine Tynan,—I thank you for 'Innocencies.' Children explain the riddle of life. They are the only real rest we know. I thank you too for the Dedication. For the sake of all the children of the Future a grown-up like myself must follow the gleam—and sometimes through murky defiles, in cumbrous armour. But that is just where your song leads my own self out of my own case, beyond the sunless gorges, over the hills and far away, to where

> 'A-down the pale green avenues
> Spring scatters her greens and blues.'

I, and many more than you suppose, thank you for that deliverance.

"As you have sent me so many songs I will send you one which I wrote years ago in 1891—because your poetry is to me what I felt then.

'After Sickness in Springtime.

'Out in the air again
Over the downs;
How the wind drowns
Body and brain.
Hums in my ears
Blinds me with tears,
Washing the world of the dead Winter's stain.

'Spring birds are here again
Scouring the world.
See the dust whirled
Over the plain!
Cleansing the mind,
Foully confined,
Day after day, in the prison of pain.

'Listen, the lark again
Sings where the skies
Dazzle our eyes!
Oh, how his strain,
Sharper than sight,
Pierces the height,
Tingles from Heaven like a glittering rain.'

"When I read 'Innocencies' I cry, 'Listen, the lark again!'

"Was it your husband who wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette* a letter about the Catholic Association? I hope it was.

"Late on this Christmas Eve all my thoughts and good wishes go out to you."

After this I find no letters for a long time, although I think some must have passed. I thought it the truest gratitude and kindness not to give him occasion to write beyond sending him my books now and again. Moreover, there was this reason for my silence. During the first decade of the century, dating from the time of the South African War, the poets had a bad time in England. I deal more fully with this later. I had a period of distrust of myself and the value of what I wrote which prevented my writing much poetry.

Probably my low opinion of my poetry in those days kept me from reminding Mr. Wyndham of my existence—though I still published a volume of poems from time to time with Mr. A. H. Bullen, who had a most lordly indifference as to whether poetry sold or not, since it was in season all the year round for him.

I find but a couple of letters from Mr. Wyndham in the three years I lived in Hertfordshire. Here is one:—

"35, PARK LANE, W.,
"2nd XII., '08.

"Dear Mrs. Tynan Hinkson,—I'm not going to apologise for the delay of this reply. Because I know you will have guessed that I waited till I had the chance of reading 'The House of the Crickets' before thanking you for your gift. I took the chance in the midst of Tariff Reform and my old Irish Land Act and Education. And your book was like the plashing of a pure stream through a frowning gorge. It was true, for it does not veil the bleak desolation or pollute the stream. It is like life which is made of austerity and kindness. It is not like death which is 'made up' of sentiment and corruption. I am sick of the farded skeleton which most novelists call life.

"Though it is fearful to believe, as you make me, in such a childhood as the brothers and sisters had, still the misery and awe of it made them human. Though one poor boy died and one sister was wild and inconsiderate they all found each other. But in the glare and blare of other authors' 'clever' novels all the avenues of perception are deafened and dazed and suffocated.

"I thank you sincerely for having written the book and warmly for having given it to me."

Of the other letter I can find only the envelope. The letters began again more regularly after I had gone to live in Kent. If you asked a kindness from Mr. Wyndham or a service the answer came as fast as the post or a telegram could carry it. He never left you in suspense. Apart from that there might be long intervals between the letters, which came always in his own hand. He never sent me a typed letter or employed an amanuensis. It was one of his exquisite courtesies.

When next he wrote to me it was in May, 1911, after he had lost his father. "I miss him sadly and at all moments," he wrote in a letter which concerned mainly my business. In the next letter he mentions a sketch of my father which I had sent him.

"I love 'The Dearest of All.' The poems are beautiful, and most true of this sorrow which has come into both our lives."

He goes on to speak of his love for his father in words which are too sacred to reprint.

In the autumn of that year he wrote again, and in that letter and those which followed I seem to see a greater warmth, a more intimate kindness, as though the shadow of the end was coming and he must touch with his friends while he might.

"You have often given me joy by your books and your letters at those moments of life that count for ever, a sense of peace and companionship. But I like your last letter because it is long and the letter of a friend; though we have never met. As life goes on and some are taken from us, and some whom we love are away for long absences, we realise the minor importance of such accidents as seeing and hearing. I did like the new poems and am glad that you write in the *Eye Witness*. To read a poem by Katharine Tynan in a paper edited by a friend carries me back to the days of the *National Observer* and Henley. I will send you a photograph—and I believe that prayers and kind thoughts are an armour of protection.

"I wrote a few lines the other day and send them as a poor return for your poems:

'Arx Amoris.

'Because I love and Death threatens but shall never
Take into darkness my adored;
I will build a City that shall last for ever
And fight for it with my sword.
Youth soon grows old: life lags for death to end it.
Love only is beautiful and still new.
I will cradle it in stone and set steel to defend it
And forget fear and be true.'"

The next letter from him which I can quote found me in Ireland—repatriated.

"I did not know to whom I was indebted for, among my Christmas gifts, the 'Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.' I now hasten to thank you for a gift which I shall prize. It will be a new link between us if you should live at Frescati and will deeply interest my beloved mother. She was touched and pleased by your gift of your book.

"I can only thank you with all my heart for the unseen but nearly felt friendship which you have given me.

"Your letter makes me homesick for Ireland. We talked of nothing but Ireland last night."

The next letter was written when I had asked him to come to see us on his way through Dublin to Limerick in the autumn of 1912.

"I wish I could. I should love to see your Irish home and to place in surroundings what I must be allowed to call our friendship. But as things are I am cast for the part of the Flying Dutchman. I hardly know how to get to Limerick and back between duties, before and after. So it is, but so it must not be. I want badly to come to Ireland for friendship, apart from politics that weary me more and more. And, *do* come here and look at pictures that would interest you, and at the downs that are as poor and happy and hospitable as Ireland is.

"It was most kind of you to write so dear a letter. I knew that I had not thanked you for 'Sally.' I loved 'Sally,' but I waited for the right moment, which you have bestowed,

"Ever your friend,
"George Wyndham."

I sent him a book I knew he would love for Christmas—how Henley would have rejoiced in it!—and my next letter is dated New Year's Day, 1913, the year of sorrow that was to take him from us.

"My dear Mrs. Katharine Tynan,—I am revelling in the 'Crock of Gold' and am most grateful for such a pure delight. I wish you and yours every blessing for the New Year.

"Yours in friendship,
"George Wyndham."

There is just one more letter telling about his son's engagement and marriage.

"2 III., 1913.

"My dear Friend,—Your letter of congratulation was most welcome. We are quite pleased with this love match for our Percy. He met the young lady for the first time on Jan. 24th and they were engaged on the 12th February. I had never seen her but I have now, and I believe they will be very happy. She is greatly pleased with the pearls I have given her. It is pretty to watch them.

"Ever your friend,
"George Wyndham."

His only son was married on April 17 that year. We had been asked to the wedding, but unfortunately we did not go, and I shall always regret it. Someone who was there said to me : " It was good to see the Wyndham clan : all so beautiful and so well pleased with each other." I add here a couple of letters written to me by Percy Wyndham, who fell in action on September 14, Holy Cross Day, 1914. One feels grateful now that his father was taken away before that happened. These two letters seem to me to be worthy of George Wyndham's son and the son of his mother. They might stand in literature for the letters of a boy, such as Percy Wyndham was, young, beautiful, and kind. The first acknowledges a wedding gift of a picture by George Russell. The second, written the following Christmas, will speak for itself.

" Clouds, East Knoyle, Salisbury,
" Sat. night, March 22nd, 1913.

" Dear Lady,—How am I to thank you for your beautiful gift ?

" And it's made twice as priceless by the fact of your giving it for my Father and Mother's sake, for no boy ever had as good as them before.

" I hope I am not being forgetful but I can't call to mind ever having seen or met you, but I love it all the more for that because it's the Spirit of Ireland.

" And I know it and understand and appreciate it. God bless you for it. I am hopeless with a pen, but believe me when I say that that picture brought Ireland here, and the fact of you sending like that brought the whole spirit of the Place. And Ireland means more to me than I can ever write, or indeed tell you, if ever I met you.

" I have never met A.E. but I have read his poems and once seen some of his sketches and I know all about him and have long known him to be one of the real Live Men in Ireland to-day.

" This is all inadequate thanks. But I love and admire the beautiful thing you have given us and I love the real breath of friendship and hospitality it brings with it.

" Yrs, Percy Wyndham.

" Clouds, East Knoyle, Salisbury,
" Christmas Day, 1913.

" Dear Mrs. Hinkson,—I have hesitated till to-day to write to you. Not because of the rush of Christmas, because I would have given up *any* time, but because I did not know how to thank you, or how to tell you how much your poems (the last one first) and your dear letter touched me. I don't know now.

"He often spoke of you to me and I loved your friendship—Although A.E. in his article says he was 'a personality *not* Irish' he was wrong there.

"He was *full* of Irish blood and his love of Ireland, was that of a real *lover*.

"It was no ordinary affection, it was right deep down in him, he loved her with passion. I have been wanting so to send you some little thing from him. He had no little sort of trinkets! And I feel you want more than that. The things he loved were his horses and his books.

"I can't give you a horse, and I know very little about books, but I have someone coming here (Charles Gatty) to explain them to me, and if you will give me time, with his aid, I would like to choose you some special one. But better still, perhaps you know some of the works he had, and if you could name one, then gladly would I give it to you.

"I know what a dear and uncommon friend you were to him, and I have long wanted to do this.

"I wish I could do more, but if I can don't hesitate to ask me.

"May you have a very happy Christmas.

"Yours, PERCY WYNDHAM."

Before another Christmas Percy Wyndham had gone to be with his father. What he says of his father's love for Ireland adds value to his simple and beautiful letters. I only pray that Ireland may love George Wyndham all her days. His great Land Act—the manumission of the Irish farmers—is his most fitting monument.

I have talked of him to many Irishmen and women, and everyone—with one significant exception—had a living memory of him which would delight him if he could know of it. He is no mere name to Irish people. In the most unexpected places a knowledge and a memory of his kindness, his charm, his wit and beauty, linger.

We never met face to face, though we *almost* met from time to time, and I was indeed under the same roof with him at least once. I never went to Clouds. Yet I think few of his personal friends can have realised him better than I did and do. I see him through Lord Edward Fitzgerald: through Lady Sarah Lennox: through Charles Fox, Lord Edward's first cousin, who in his charming youth must have been like Mr. Wyndham. His charming youth did I say? I had forgotten those poignant passages in which Mrs. Fox told of her husband's last illness—"her dear angel"—thanking God solemnly for the gift of his love. Fox then was an old man and a sick one, yet he was his wife's "dear angel": and "sweet and heavenly" are her epithets for him in his last painful illness. And so the immortal creature of God triumphs over mortality. With the same idolising affection was Lord Edward regarded by his family. "That angel, Edward," is a phrase one meets with again and again in the memoirs of the Family which had all the gifts and all the graces. Happy the men who, beautiful and ever young to the rest of the world, are best beloved of all to their own.

I heard a story of Mr. Wyndham the other day. A certain notable priest who has done a great work for his people gave hospitality to the Chief Secretary when he visited the West of Ireland. Father D—— wanted some new roads made, and presented such an eloquent case to Mr. Wyndham that he consented to see for himself the truth of Father D——'s assertions. "The next morning," said Father D——, "I had the worst buck-jumper of a horse and the worst-hung outside car in Connaught at the door to take him out for a drive. Only the hardness of my heart and my knowing that the roads were so badly wanted could have made me play such a trick on him, for indeed I loved him, and you couldn't help it. He was the pleasantest and the handsomest man you could lay eyes on, let alone his being a great-grandson of Lord Edward. Well, off we went, and the driver had the tip, and he took us up and down every twisty old boreen in the county, and poor Mr. Wyndham kept saying: 'I can see for myself that you did not exaggerate,' and the breath almost bumped out of him as he said it, but he smiling all the time and never asking to be let off. So at last I got sorry, and told the driver to take us the shortest way home. I never saw a man enjoy his dinner better than Mr. Wyndham did that evening, although it was only a couple of chickens and a bit of corned beef. He said to me afterwards, with a twinkle in his eye, 'You shall have your roads, Father D——. I never thought roads could be as bad. And you tell me they are the best roads in the county? Well, well—what are the worst like?' But I think all the time he knew."

Of his adored son I should like to give this letter written by his soldier servant to a boy who loved George Wyndham as a boy loves a man—with admiration, with awe, with tenderness.

"September 24th, 1914.

"No. 3 Company received your presents which were very acceptable and as they came from a young gentleman so nearly related to Mr. Percy Wyndham they were eagerly sought after.

"He died a soldier's death leading his platoon in the firing line against the Germans. The whole of the Company was sad when they heard of it. He was like a father to his men and I have seen him in the night after a long and weary march (during the retirement from Mons) rubbing ointment on his men's blistered feet when he was tired himself.

"We hope that when you grow to be a man you will be as strong, brave and respected a gentleman as your Uncle Percy."

That rubbing of ointment on the feet! One remembers the woman who broke the box of precious ointment and for Whom she did it. It is a happy parallel.

The privately-printed book from which I have taken this letter has pictures of Percy in his exquisite babyhood, in his childhood, in his beautiful young manhood. Alas that all this must pass, leaving the poor earth so much the poorer!

In all the toll the war has taken of the bright and beautiful there can be none dearer than the Wyndhams. Up to the 1st of May, 1915, there had been three Wyndhams killed and two badly wounded. Since then another has gone, a golden-haired boy of nineteen, of whom one wrote :

> " He was fair, with a beautiful head and brow, the most open radiant countenance, a perfectly buoyant and shapely figure. There was a lilt in his tread. . . . He had imagination ; absolute modesty ; entire freedom from self-consciousness and a sympathy quite startling in one so young. He had courage, ' grit,' a wide outlook on life and a tender loving heart."

Alas, poor world ! In the Heavenly City " There are boys and girls in the streets thereof "—but the poor world is cold.

CHAPTER XVIII

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

The London suburb is not exactly a friendly place. We were, I think, nearly a year of our second residence at Ealing before our next-door neighbours on the left took any notice of us. We were there nearly seven years before a *rapprochement* came with our neighbours on the right. Literary people are somewhat unclassed, if not declassed, in the London suburb ; unless they be of the fortunate few, such as Miss Corelli or the Baroness Orczy —only, of course, they would not be there. The respectable suburb is not sure of the literary person. You may even receive letters in a name which is not your married name. That in itself is a matter for suspicion. You dress shockingly badly when you take your country walks. Your children are imps. You do not look after your servants. Then, if you are Irish and do not go to the recognised churches—one or other of them—things look black indeed.

In London proper you may be anything you like : it is nobody's business but your own. In the suburb, if the common formula does not apply to you, you are condemned beforehand.

The most important people in the little road were, we found later, the family of the retired naval man who lived at our right. There was a lady, several daughters, a son engaged in study—and the Captain himself, who was for us for quite a long time a cough and an irascible red face in the distance.

The family showed us no civility at our coming-in. Nor did anyone else. We returned to the suburb unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

We happened to be one of a row of very trim houses with very trim gardens. There was not a child in the short row of houses before we came. It was really a joy to look from upstairs windows on the neighbours' gardens. The rose-arches, the sweet peas, the herbaceous borders, were a delight. So much in so little! All the summer evenings the neighbours watered their gardens, with a delightful sound of summer rain and a grateful perfume of parched flowers saying their grace after drink.

We did an unheard-of thing. Our grass plot was too exiguous for croquet or tennis. We made a kitchen garden of it. It gave great offence. *We* thought our kitchen garden lovely. We even considered putting "The Cabbages" on our gate-post instead of the ridiculous little name that was there.

The gardener, planting the cabbages, nodded his head towards the window behind the blind of which the Cough sat.

"There 'e is!" he said, "an' if I know 'im, a'usin' of langwidge somethink 'orrid about these yere cabbages."

Things were conveyed to us. The road was very irate about our cabbages. It was not sure that we were *allowed* to do it by the terms of our agreement. We lived in the shadow of unpopularity.

Our first touch with our neighbours on the left was when Paudeen, for some reason or other, sleeping in a sitting-room with an open window, barked in the night. As he did not disturb our slumbers I am inclined to believe that the barking was a mere pretext on the part of the left-hand next-door young lady to explore our interior. I found her sitting in the drawing-room one Sunday morning wearing a very severe aspect. She had come to complain. Our dog had kept them awake all night. They had knocked and rung in the small hours and had had to go away unanswered. Plainly she suspected us of hearing and not answering. I said I was very sorry. She went on : " The whole road must have been disturbed. Have you had no other complaints ? Not from Mrs. L—— ? Mrs. L—— is a most particular lady." Mrs. L—— was the lady on the right.

At this moment the hall-door knocker sounded.

" There she is ! " said I, " and I'm not going to see her. I've had quite enough visitors this morning "—this referred to a lady who had come to take up the " character " of my Irish servants, not to my present visitor.

She immediately became kindly helpful.

" I wouldn't if I were you," she said sympathetically. " You run away and I'll let myself out."

The person at the hall-door proved not to be Mrs. L——. However, I thought the acquaintance sufficiently established when lilac time came, and my neighbour's garden on the left sent a great blooming bough over the wall, to ask if I might have some lilac instead of stealing it, as I might have done if we had not been acquainted. There was a most generous response, and so, friendship was established—on that side.

The other side was more obstinate. A child's ball went over the wall and was flung back with what we—the wall between—took to be cold indignation. There was no sign from the right-hand neighbour when the doctor's carriage stopped day after day at our door. The young man who was reading would come and shut his window with a bang when the children romped in our garden or were obstreperous. The relationship on our side hardened into passive dislike. We were not concerned for the winter cough which kept the old sailor within doors for steadily lengthening periods. We became used to the sound and hardly noticed it.

For six long years we lived side by side in a most inhuman ignoring of each other. Then came the summer when our first-born discovered a gift of " language " and used it in the garden. It was of no use our objecting. He looked on it as a fine manly accomplishment. He first used it for a hot poultice at the age of six. " Dash the thing," he said ; " take it away ! " After that there was an interval. I arrived at the bathroom door one evening to find a singularly inefficient nursery governess bleating outside. " He won't let me in to wash his ears," she said, " and he won't do it properly himself." From the other side of the door came a splashing and a jolly voice. " I'm seven now, and I'm dashed if any woman comes in when I'm having my bath. No—not mother. Mother is a woman just the same as anyone else."

After that victory over authority the dashes became unashamed. " Oh, you shouldn't mind that word. That's boys' words. All my boys say it." There was an earlier occasion before he was a schoolboy when he had awakened in the morning like a rose refreshed. " I said a fearful word out loud to myself in the middle of the night," he said joyfully, " and I can't be stood in the corner for it, because everyone were asleep." " What was the word ? " " It were ' bloomin'.' "

It was really a dreadful matter about those dashes. There was a new governess, the kind that children love, with an immense capacity for and delight in devising adventures. She was not appalled at the " dashes "—being accustomed to them in an irascible parent, we learnt later. I fear they rather pleased her. Perhaps they prevented her feeling home-sick. There was no rigid disapproval ; and of that fact I fear the young gentleman was well aware.

It became more serious when the "dashes" simply flew all over the garden and the garden wall to the neighbours, it being summer-time. We had heathenish ways. The children played cricket on the grass-patch that was left from the kitchen-garden. No—I believe the cricket was usually played in the green "private road" between the houses. Our kindly neighbours on the left had gone by this time, and a strictly Evangelical family had taken their places. Three little girls, with pigtails down their backs, sat reading good books in the garden on a Sunday. His little sister, trying to hammer down the stumps with too much zeal, hammered her elder brother's fingers instead. Then the dashes flew. The governess reported that three pale-faced little girls opened their garden door and looked forth wearing an expression of obvious exhilaration.

We expected nothing less than a round-robin from the neighbours asking us to depart. Nothing happened, till a few days later when the children were having tea in what they called their tent, which was no more than a white drugget on four uprights set up in the private road. That tent had wonderful uses. You had only to let down the sides and there you were in the desert with wild beasts prowling outside. It might be a ship or a raft, or a robber's den—or—almost anything.

The meal was progressing merrily when the garden gate of our right-hand neighbour opened and the old sea captain looked out, pursing his lips, pushing out his shaggy eyebrows, his face as red as the sun in a frosty fog. He came forward and looked down at the party in the tent.

"Having a good time," said he, in a loud roar—"hey?" Then he forgot to be an ogre and stood beaming at the children. "So you're the boy that uses the language, hey? Where does he get it?" to the governess. "I say, where does he get it?"

One of the children offered him tea. He answered that tea was not much in his line, but he would not refuse for once. He slung himself down with some difficulty until he too was under the tent and seated on a cushion, where nothing would do him but to put an arm round the shoulder of the boy who used language, remarking that he was a fine little chap, so he was, and he hoped his father and mother were going to make a sailor of him.

After that day he joined the party most days, and although he seldom had any tea he began to contribute dainties to the meal. After tea when the tent was let down he added ever so much to the fearsomeness of the games, introducing features the children never would have thought of, and occasionally going outside and making weird noises, such as the washing of waves and the growling of beasts, to the delighted terror of those within.

One of those days the cold unfriendliness of years was broken. The eldest daughter next door met me in the road and spoke. "Your children have done Papa so much good," she said, with a little blush. "Especially your elder little boy. You see, it's very dull for Papa sometimes."

The following winter the cough was more insistent than usual, and we were aware of it at last, after all the callousness, and grieved for it. In spring the cough was a little better, and, in a fine April, the old sailor got out once more. We elders had as yet no speaking acquaintance with him. One day when we were in company with his special friend we saw him the other side of the road. The boy, preoccupied with something, rushed on his way. We looked back and saw the old sailor standing still and staring after the child. By the time we had captured him the old man had gone on. We were vexed about it. "The next time," we said; but there was no next time. He never was out again.

There followed a time when the coughing was incessant, when the doctor came at all hours, when we stood by our window at night and saw the square of light the sick man's window made upon the grass, wringing our hands while we waited for the doctor's carriage to drive up and the drug to be administered that would give ease to the poor worn-out old frame. How *could* we have thought we should come to care so much? The children took in their little posies day after day when they went to inquire for him. The wife and daughters of the sick man used to come and lift them in their arms and kiss them and cry while they answered and sent them away.

Presently the coughing ceased. Now and again the old man rallied a little from the stupor in which he lay, only to slip back again, a little further every time.

One day I went in to say good-bye, my first visit and my last in seven years. I had achieved my heart's desire. We were going to live in *real* country. The old sea captain had passed away in the night. The eldest daughter came to me and held my hands.

"He noticed nothing," she said, "these last days, only the children's flowers. We left them beside him so that he should see them the first thing when his eyes opened. He always sent his love to them, especially the elder little boy. He was *so* interested in him. Indeed, your children made a great interest for him, especially in those months last summer before he became really ill."

She turned away: then looked back with her eyes full of tears.

"To think that it is your first visit in seven years!" she said. "I'm afraid it was *our* fault."

A little later came a big box of sweets for the children from the widow of their old friend. She wrote:—

"These are from my dear husband. The day your little girl brought in the lilies-of-the-valley, he said 'I want those children to have a big box of sweets from me.' It was almost the last time he spoke. He was very fond of your children. How can I thank you for a sympathy so dear and warm, and, I may say, *so* unexpected ?"

So our ships which had been berthed together for so long, within and without hail of each other, parted.

We never had any official recognition from the Suburb. Few called on us. We were never included in any of its doings, social or otherwise. But all over the place were the children's friends—especially, in those days, the elder boy's. "I don't see how I can pray for all my friends," he said one night as he went to bed. "I should think I have eighty-four thousand of them." He was an adventurous child. He shared his joys and sorrows with the people he met, having no sense of the strange barriers human creatures set up between themselves and other human creatures. His social instincts were marked. When he came first to the Suburb—he was not yet three—he hailed all the charing ladies and those who "do" steps, and all honest working men with a cheery "Good morning, dirty lady!" or "dirty gentleman," as the case might be. Luckily he was unintelligible except to those who knew him, so smiles and blessings followed his steps.

There was the other old sailor whose acquaintance he made on the Seat of Meetings which overlooked the Weald of Harrow. He was a sailor man of the merchant service. He, too, thought the boy eminently fitted for the sea, though without the old sea captain's premises—for those, I think, were pre-"language" days. "It is a very 'ealthy life," he said; and was delighted to tell us when we guessed his age at sixty that he was eighty-one. He was the dearest, most dandified old man imaginable, and he had very fine manners. Someone used to send him out on fine mornings to walk the sunny side of the road, with a flower in his coat, his clothes neatly brushed, a clean handkerchief sticking out of his breast pocket, all as bright as a new pin. One surmised someone young and bright and kind, who gave him a pat on the cheek as he went his way. He was certainly very well taken care of, and he always had a good cigar. When he saw you coming the other side of the road he would always cross over to speak to you, taking his cigar out of his mouth and holding it behind him. A dear, lovely, gentle old man, looking as though the sea had washed him clean. After a time we used to meet him walking with the children and their governess. One Christmas morning he introduced himself with an elaborate flourish as our son-in-law. "This young lady," he said, indicating Four-years-old, "has accepted my hand, my heart being already hers." "I don't think I really could, mother," said the young lady wide-eyed and rather frightened; "you see he's so 'mensely old."

He was always promising to come and drink a glass of grog and smoke a pipe with us, but he never came. We never even knew his name. He disappeared quite suddenly after a spell of black east wind. They had a way of disappearing like that, the children's old friends. He had put out to sea in "a season of calm weather," bound for the Land of the Young. How very much someone must have missed him!

Then there was the old lady—with the gentlest face. She used to sit on the sheltered seat of what was once a country lane—a country bank behind her with great tree-roots twisted in it—of sunny mornings. There was an elderly son who read his paper. He had an air towards her as though she were his one precious thing left, and she was so frail that a breath might blow her away. The child always stayed with her a little while as we went on our walks, and would come rushing after us calling out that he had had to talk to his old lady. There came a day when he had great adventure ahead of him. He was going to town with his father, to have his hair cut and other diversions, and he told every creature he met as we went on our walk. At the seat he ran right into the dear old lady's arms, which closed about him. "My little dear, I love you," she said so softly; and then to us: "You have a very dear little boy."

She too went out on unknown seas—suddenly passing from our ken. We caught a glimpse once or twice afterwards of her son, grimmer, more elderly than before. Plainly there were no new ships on the sea for him.

The friend who stands out most clearly in those years of the Suburb is, however, Father Gilbert Dolan, the Benedictine. From the day he came into the garden where we were sitting—a big benign man, some six foot, two or three, in height, and built in proportion, with a rosy handsome face and the blue eyes of a boy sparkling above his spectacles—and lifted the most obstreperous of the babies to his knee, he took possession of our hearts.

After that first day he came very often. He adored children, as only the man who has made the great sacrifice and given them up can adore them. He was the children's big playfellow from that day onward. I have seen him, his cheerfulness bedimmed and overcast, during a week or ten days in which it was a wilful child's whim to remark of himself, "He doesn't like Father Dolan." I have seen him unreasonably exhilarated when a little girl of four called him pensively her "dear old elephant." Our road led to the station and to most other places, at least for Father Gilbert. He always had a few minutes to spare for the children. He might be going to town, top-hatted and black-broad-clothed, for a function at Archbishop's House or a meeting of one of the societies to which he belonged; he had a taste for architecture, archæology, and such matters. If he was in a hurry for the train he would not disturb us in our upstairs workroom. But for the few minutes he stayed there was riot in the nursery—or the schoolroom, as the children had agreed to call it when the scholars ranged between seven and four.

He used to emerge from these hurly-burlies covered with dust, panting, laughing—for the children to climb him from the floor to his shoulders, and so to touch the ceiling, was the routine performance. He would go off in a violent hurry for his train after a perfunctory brushing, the children calling after him as he went.

He had the great charm which belongs especially to the regular priesthood—that is to say to members of an Order, although I have found it also among the Seculars. There is no such everlasting boy as the priest. He gives up the things that sweeten life for other men. He has the "loneliness," as the old Saints used to put it—very often a heart-breaking malady. On the other hand, he keeps the heart of a boy. There is no such place for jests and laughter as the community rooms of the Orders, and the Diocesan Colleges to which their students return from time to time like happy schoolboys.

It is common among Irish people to express doubts about the English gift of humour. There is certainly a large section of the English middle class which has very little sense of humour. I have found a bubbling-over fresh sense sometimes among the English lower classes as I have found it in Bohemia, but nowhere such a young gaiety as among the priests. They are always laughing at each other, playing pranks on each other, telling sly stories of each other. If you are lucky enough to be in their confidence you enjoy a golden humour, a humour without malice—or at least a very little malice—a clean humour.

Father Gilbert came to us with a jest. The Benedictines were newly installed at Ealing. The celebrated Rev. Richard O'Halloran had said to some inquirer:

"Go up to Blakesley Avenue to Father Weld Blundell" (the Superior of the Benedictines). "He is eating my food and drinking my drink—and not getting fat on it either." Father Weld Blundell was extremely ascetic-looking.

I do not intend this as a specimen—only—it was the first. Father Gilbert came to us always with a bundle of jests and stories, as other priests came afterwards.

The poor priests! One of my happiest memories of my English life is of the priests and our friendships with them. In England, that land of converts, the priest suffers from being placed on a pedestal, where he is most uncomfortable. He is always "the Father" and treated as though he were the Grand Llama. Those good people never understand the human side of the priests—how they call each other by their surnames and poke fun at each other and like and dislike each other, and are so deeply glad to be just human beings.

I think no greater kindness can be done than to receive a lonely priest into family life in which he can be perfectly at his ease. A priest's friendship is a deeply touching thing. Where he bestows it he gives of necessity—he, the man of no ties—more than those with many ties can return him.

There is something peculiarly touching in a priest's affection for children as in the affectionate friendship of a priest for a woman. The woman represents to him something of the mother, something of the woman he might have loved in other circumstances, something of the child—and withal something of the Mother of God. His very aloofness gives a strange delicacy and beauty to the appeal she possesses; and this is felt the more the higher the degree of refinement, of sensitiveness, of education. The simpler, rougher, less educated priest would probably not feel this appeal at all.

I read a charming story the other day of Blessed Henry Suso. He tells it himself: "One day as I was walking down a narrow lane I met a woman. I stepped into the mud to let her pass. 'Kind sir,' she said, 'why do you, a priest of God, step aside to let me pass? 'Tis I should do you honour.' 'Nay, lady,' I said, 'I must show reverence to all women for the sake of my Blessed Lady and Queen in Heaven.'"

To be sure there is a considerable leaven of Irish or other blood in the priests. There can be very little unmixed blood in England in our day, at least in the cities and among the "transacting" people, to borrow an adjective from John O'Leary. A distinguished musician, himself part Hungarian, said to me once that unmixed English blood only made for success in business. He conceded too much, I think: the unmixed English blood is to be found only in petty trade and among the peasants of out-of-the-way country places—if by English one means Anglo-Saxon.

Father Gilbert's family had been in England a hundred years, wherefore he claimed to be English when we first knew him. Later on, when our great affection had grown up, he said one day that he was sure the best in him was Irish. We had a jest against him. He told us a story of the time when he was on the mission in Liverpool. A certain marine-store dealer—I forget his nationality—otherwise a rag-and-bone man, a very decent fellow when he was sober, occasionally got drunk, when he became cantankerous and beat the wife for whom he had a tender affection in ordinary life. This was a matter of great grief to him. He came to Father Gilbert one day with a suggestion. It was that when he got drunk, but before the quarrelsome stage was arrived at, Father Gilbert should be sent for to give him a good trouncing with a stick which should bring him to his senses, and leave him something to remember by. His wife thought very well of the plan. So, urged by the pair, Father Gilbert, seeing all the humour of it, consented. The plan proved brilliantly successful. On the first occasion, when he had quite come out of his bout, the marine-store dealer sent an offering of five pounds to Father Gilbert, which offering was repeated as often as his intervention was necessary. When Father Gilbert had told us this story we asked delightedly: "And do you mean to say that after that laying on of hands you call yourself anything but an Irish priest?"

His friendship very much sweetened the seven years of our life in the Suburb. He came and went as he would. Two or three evenings a week he used to dine with us. Those occasions were really intimate. After dinner we adjourned to our workroom upstairs, which the servants would always call "the study." It was a very pleasant room, dainty and fresh as well as bookish and pen-and-inkish, and it looked into a little row of dwarf poplars. If we did not want to talk we were silent or read newspapers. I remember evenings when the London east wind was much in evidence, and we three friends sat round the fire and read all the evening.

He was game for anything—dear Father Gilbert! He liked nothing so well as to accompany us to a literary dinner, where his towering height and priest's garb made him very conspicuous. We used to try to induce him to wear his monkish garb, but that he would never do in London. Once at a Yorick Club dinner, or rather after it, he was picked out by Charles Bertram, the conjurer, as "a gentleman whom no one could suspect of being a confederate," and went up, as shy and merry as a boy, to the platform, where he was surely a very unique figure. He went to the Greek play at Bradfield with us. He went to a Whitefriars dinner. Wherever we took our summer holidays he came to us. Once it was a French *plage*. As soon as he arrived he negotiated a bathing suit. It was no easy task to fit him, and the bathers stared at this giant of a man in the be-ringed suit.

There was a tiny curé in the French village. It was the *patronage*: and he was very pleased to have the assistance of the " great English priest " in his services. Father Gilbert saying Mass in the tiny chapel of St. Pierre, which hung on a rock over the sea, his head up among the votive ships slung from the low ceiling, was a sight. I remember how he laughed at one of the children who had the good thought of offering a boat to St. Pierre. The boy selected the second best boat or the third best boat he possessed. When it was suggested to him that the Saint ought to have the best, he returned: " The paint is off this one, and it goes over on its side in the water, but it's really the most decorational: that's why I want the Saint to have it."

Dudley Hardy made a drawing one day of Father Gilbert and the little French priest talking in the village street. I did some verses for it. We called it " L'Entente Cordiale." It appeared in the *Sketch* or *Black and White*. I have the drawing. Father Gilbert used to wince a little when he looked at it. The element of caricature was too strongly in evidence.

He came to us at Ockley; at Bletchingley, where he had a tiny room of the old, old cottage, and we had a jest that he slept with his feet out of the window. He was tremendously keen to see everything, but especially old churches and buildings of all sorts. We sometimes struck, not being nearly so energetic as he was. He used to come to Christmas Trees parties and enter into the fun as heartily as Jack Hassall, who was our Father Christmas for several years, and Dudley Hardy, his assistant. *En parenthèse*, there never was so delightful and weird a Father Christmas as ours. He always came by the chimney—at least there was a fearful fall of fireirons in a room overhead—after which he appeared, shaking the soot with the snow from his garments. Such a freakish Father Christmas and his assistant! It was as good as a pantomime—the old-fashioned sort—to see the two together; but the realism was sometimes too much for the small children. I remember one very dear little girl in a Liberty frock of grey velvet, with a wreath of roses in her hair, who used to sit with her back to the Tree all the time and receive her presents with eyes shut tight lest she should disgrace herself and her brothers by "being a baby."

I am sure no child at those entertainments enjoyed them half so much as Father Gilbert did. Once, just after a Christmas Tree, the little girl who was afraid had a sudden and sharp illness, the only one in her four years of life, and that one very nearly the last. The worst was over before Father Gilbert, who was himself ill, knew. "Why did you not send for me?" he asked, with sudden passion. "Don't you know that if one of them was ill I'd come if I had to travel on my hands and knees?"

The good years in the Suburb! Well, we left the Suburb together. We could not stay after he had gone. Our dream was of a time when we three good friends should again be together. It was never realised, but we had him for short periods of time, and our hearts never diverged.

CHAPTER XIX

AN AUTHOR'S POST-BAG

I FIND among my papers an envelope full of letters bearing the above superscription, the collection evidently put together several years ago. It might have had numerous additions if one had remembered to keep them, for the writer's trade makes one acquainted with strange correspondents. The offers of marriage which come to the woman who distinguishes herself, if it be only by criminality, ceased with my marriage. They came from my own countrymen, and they were rather mad proposals. One made his over and over again, and, remaining unanswered, took farewell of a hopeless suit with the magnanimous verse—

> " God bless yourself,
>   Though hard your heart be ;
> And God speed your pen,
>   Though it write not to me."

Every writer knows the autograph hunter, whom I am amiably (though I say it) willing to oblige, and the book-hunter, who is a much more reprehensible person. Not everyone who asks for a book is a book-hunter, certainly not the enclosed Carmelite nun who had heard rumours of a little book of mine which carried comfort to the bereaved of the Great War, and begged humbly for a copy since the Rule of Poverty forbade her buying it. There are times when one loves to give a book to a perfectly unknown person. And by the way, what has become of Autograph Jimmy, the American gentleman who bought all one's books and sent them to be inscribed, sending all expenses, down to the wrapper? He seems to have dropped out. Has his "perfectly unique" collection stood still for want of housing room? Or has he gone over the Great Divide?

Once I had the delightful experience while I lived in England of sending to a big Belfast shop for patterns. There came back amid the patterns a scrap of paper:—

> "We have all read your books and we all love them."

A long list of initials followed. That is such a message out of the unknown as makes the writer's heart lift up.

Many letters are from cranks and unappreciated persons of genius. Here is one which came to me from the English Midlands many years ago.

> "Dear Madam,—Will you out of pure kindness trouble to take my 'Beautiful Chimes' to a pub., a good pub., and ask him if he will pay me for it. I'd take £1 or two. I want to get into the known reviews. If I sell myself it is slow work. I don't like to ask if you would write short preface. It has been read to several. They seemed very affected. One Bishop's wife had 12 copies; the Dean 50. All say they like it but two women's rights women do not like it. . . . I think those who accept poems ought to pay 2*s*. 6*d*. each, but they only give me 4 of their papers containing it. I have brought out booklets paying (by selling) the printer 3 months after for expenses of pub. . . . I have had an unusual life, shocks, perils, dangers, hair-breadth escapes. Have known what it is to be rich and visit county people,—most is lost—all is different. I am like Margaret of Anjou for experiences. We have good house, 13 acres, pony-chaise, greenhouse, Alderneys; all looks well but not so . . . I have some booklets left. If anyone you know cares for one, 6*d*., most suitable for those who have had a loss. Once the —— by return took a poem, 'Pelargoniums,'—never paid—but one day got 13 shillings for Christmas verses. Exhausted there. Have won prizes 5*s*. but not often. I feel I must write. I write for —— no pay! How get stamps? Husband hates bills. So cross. All men alike."

There was a great deal more domestic detail in the poor lady's letter which I omit.

The next letter is a very tiny one. It came to me from Rhodesia. It consisted of a sheet of paper on which were pasted with great care two short extracts from a story of mine in the *London Magazine*. I had given my hero brown eyes in one and grey in the other. Below was written in a very neat hand, "Madam,—Pray be accurate."

One day there came to me this letter :—

"F.C.S. ESTACION KRABBE, ARGENTINA,
"September 1, 1905.

"Madam,—I hope you will pardon the liberty we take in writing to you but we are out here on a lonely station in the Wilds of Argentine and stray copy of the *Strand Magazine*, Jan. 1905, came to us. And among the stories your one viz. The Heart of a Grandfather we like so much that we all wish to thank you for it. Hoping this will reach you in safety we hope you will write some more like it.

"Your respectful,
"A. POOLE, tele.
"J. J. MAGUIRE, Asst. Station Master.
"F. MINSON, S.M."

I replied to these good fellows with a promise of the book of short stories in which "The Heart of a Grandfather" was to appear, as soon as it should be ready, and presently I had an answer.

"F. MINSON, STATION MASTER, KRABBE.

"To Miss Hinkson.

"Dear Miss,—Just a short Note in answer to your kind letter in which we receive to-day. It was very kind of you to answer so quick. I wish I could send you a curio from this Place but there are no shops of any discription here this Station is in the heart of a wheat-growing district and our nearest Neighbour is a English Estantion or Farm about 50 miles away so you see we have no Visiting List. Our other Neighbours are half savages, half black and white called Argentino. Some of them are very Nice, that is the true Native, but there are a lot Spanish and Italians and Indians inter-married, so you get a very funny mixture of Blood, all the Badness and none of the Goodness of these Natives. Thanking you for your kind offer but S. Maguire and Poole are shifted to other station. And I have been very lucky to get 6 months leave to the Old Country.

"I telegraph the content of your letter to S. Poole, and he has replie and told me to tell you he is going to write a book taking as a copy your story, so I hope you will not take proceeding against him for Copyright. Of course we can Telegraph to each other so I not left intirely alone.

"I must now Close. I hope you will excuse this bad spelling and etc. as we have to write all our letters in Spanish we get out of the way of writing the English Language. So good-bye,

"Yours respectfully,
"F. MINSON, S.M.

"Just has I have finished writing this two of Native have been having a few words and as usal the knife is out and one of them is severely hurt, so you can understand the life we live."

When the first of these letters reached us we thought the enterprise was due to Maguire, the Irish one of the "Three Musketeers," but apparently Minson, S.M., presumably an Englishman, was the moving spirit. I had already sent them off the book, and I wrote at once asking Minson to come to see me if he happened to be in London. He did not come and I never heard of them again.

Here is a letter concerning a review of mine addressed to an editor. The lady who wrote it had Spanish blood.

"To the Editor.

"Sir,—Many thanks for letter which I duly received this morning. I can well understand that space precludes you from inserting the communications of authors to their critics. Had this been a criticism I would never have thought of asking you to insert my letter. It was however not a criticism but vulgar abuse and I cannot help thinking that there are only two courses open to you in the circumstances.

"1. To let those that play your fools say no more than is set down for them.

"2. For the credit of your paper to keep your reviewers to their work of reviewing books and let them leave to politicians the pleasing task of personalities.

"I am, Sir, Yours very sincerely,
"—— ——."

I may mention that my review was quite a respectful one; but I was very glad of the anonymity of the reviewer on that occasion.

I often suffered from this kind of sensitiveness, especially on the part of my own country-people. There was a certain red-headed wild journalist in Dublin who on finding himself in a book and being told that it was a sympathetic portrait, remarked, "I don't care a d—— whether it's sympathetic or not. I'll have his scalp, Why should the d——d fellow make copy out of me?"

This prejudice seemed common to all classes. In one case I was threatened by a sister-novelist and Irishwoman with a libel action because, in the course of a most enthusiastic review, I had suggested that a famous beauty of the eighteenth century bearing the novelist's name might be a relation of her family. The offence lay in that the beauty's husband had been a cloth merchant in eighteenth-century Dublin, whereas the novelist's forbears had been engaged in another branch of trade, presumably higher.

The young man who was grey-eyed and brown-eyed in the *London Magazine* got me into dreadful hot water. I had given him the name of a well-known Anglo-Irish family. Well, if I had given him any other name the results might have been just as disastrous. There's no pleasing some people. There happened to be a real Dick L——, as there was bound to be, and he was in the Army. His father, who must have been a most peppery old gentleman, wrote a violent letter to the Editor of the *London*, which was forwarded to me.

Now I forgot—perhaps I did not know—Mr. Wyndham's axiom: "Never withdraw, never apologise." With a certain amount of enjoyment I set out to blarney the old gentleman. I wrote—to the Editor—that as the young man was an Irishman of a distinguished

Irish family, it was natural that I should have selected a name associated in my mind with all the great traditions of the Irish gentry, that, of course, the juxtaposition of the two names might be considered personal, but that anyone acquainted with the history of Ireland must be aware, consciously or unconsciously—the latter in my case—that those names always occurred in Mr. L——'s family, and so on. The original letter had been very violent. The answer to my pacificatory letter was unbelieving as to my good intentions. Mr. L—— found my excuses very flimsy. Frankly he did not believe in them. My admission of certain facts was no more than he had expected. He *knew* I had some knowledge of the L—— family, a little knowledge perhaps; but as a little knowledge is a dangerous thing I ought to have seen that my knowledge was widened by ascertaining, what was a most simple and easy matter, viz., the names of all living male members of the L—— family, which counted in all twenty-nine, and not to have used the name of his son and made a laughing-stock of him. My suggestion that the hero of my story was at all events intended to be a very pleasant young soldier he dismissed with scorn. There was nothing wrong about my young man's moral character, he wrote, but his son would not take it as a compliment to have his name stuck on to what was known in Ireland as "an omadhawn," of the meaning of which he supposed I must have *an unconscious knowledge*. He underlined the last phrase with bitter irony.

I take the opportunity here of apologising to the many innocent and inoffensive people whose names I have used at one time or another for the personages of my novels. Or perhaps I ought to thank my stars and my obscurity that they never found me out. After all it is too late to invent new names, especially when one writes so many novels. The peerage has been my pitfall. I have always had to introduce the peerage into my novels, not so much because I liked it as because the public liked it. It never occurred to me in those early days when I named one of my Lords after some obscure English village or some wild cliff face in Ireland that I might possibly be using real names. But as a matter of fact I often was. The courtesy title was my pitfall, since after one or two blunders I was careful. How many times have my reviewers said: " . . . but it is too bad of Mrs. Hinkson to use the name of a well-known peer." I did it innocently. I did not possess a "Debrett," but I had always taken care to select the most unlikely names. Fortunately the name usually belonged to the hero or the sub-hero. But once a gentleman who never washed bore the name of a living peer. It is a long time ago, and I do not think he will find out now, although Fate is malignant in these matters.

I thought at one time of calling all my heroes "John Smith," but that seemed hardly possible, unless all my novels were to be sequels, and their number made that an impossibility.

The touchiness of my own country-people was always a trouble. It was often a trouble to the *Pall Mall Gazette* and kind Sir Douglas Straight too. As I have said—I am quoting a distinguished member of the staff—it was a rule of the office that all my things went in. Now and again, Sir Douglas used to return me a poem to show me that I was mortal. I always put it by and sent it again when I judged that a sufficient length of time had elapsed for him to have forgotten it. It went in eventually, although once I had to send it four times. One poem was published twice.

I was always writing short articles on all manner of subjects for the *Pall Mall*. My brother-in-law, John O'Mahony, used to dig me curious things out of Irish antiquarian journals and such places. I would suck the honey out of dry-as-dust articles and pot it for the *Pall Mall*. Somewhere, midway of the honey, but not too obtrusively, I used to pop in a propitiatory phrase—" as that most erudite archæologist, Mr. Blank, has told us." I cannot remember " Mr. Blank " himself objecting in any of these cases, but nearly always a friend did, not mincing his words about my process of extraction. Sir Douglas, good easy man, would write : " Dear Mrs. Hinkson, will you answer this good gentleman ? " I cannot remember that I ever succeeded in propitiating a countryman of my own in these circumstances. The English are so much more simple.

Once a sketch of mine of a happening in an Irish village, purporting to be fiction, reached that village. It seemed the last thing in the world likely to happen that the *Pall Mall Gazette* should reach a small shopkeeper in a mountain village in Ireland, but it did, and the shopkeeper was the one person in the sketch to whom an uncivil epithet was applied.

He wrote to the *Pall Mall*, saying that he was the person referred to, and his letter was published. To get home on me, having put on my cap, he added, more in sorrow than in anger, that the pain of the wound was that it had been dealt by an old and dear friend. He bore me no grudge afterwards, for when I met him face to face at last, having successfully avoided him on several occasions, he gave me the warmest of welcomes back to my native land.

One day when I was returning home from my country walk a beautiful young bulldog came and sniffed at my Irish terrier. Paddy, being a simple creature, did what the sophisticated Paudeen would never have done. He growled. The minute he did the bulldog was into him. A couple of honest working-men, a boy with a basket, stood and looked on from afar with interest. A coachman on his box flicked at the struggle with his whip. Beyond that no one interfered. I heard Paddy's spine crack, or thought I did. I danced round in a frenzy. Would no one save my dog? "Oh, for a gentleman!" I shrieked, insulting the honest working-men. My cry was heard. In the nick of time a gentleman arrived. He only had to shout lustily for the bulldog to let go. It was really an amiable thing, although when I shook my fist at him he turned his china-blue eyes on me with lambent fire in them, while his beautiful slobbering lips curled back over the fangs as he emitted a low growl.

I really pitied the policeman whom we drove to lead the bulldog to the police-station by a piece of string. He pointed out that it was none of his business to affix the string, but when it was done—and our hearts had melted in the process towards the offender, who was so babyishly acquiescent in his fate, even licking the hand that tied him—they went off, the policeman at one end of a yard of string, the bulldog at the other.

We had *said* we would proceed to extremities, that we could not have the harmless dogs of the neighbourhood—by which we meant our dog—at the mercy of a wandering bulldog; but not for worlds, if it rested with us, would we have turned down our thumbs.

That night the following letter reached us, which, though it hardly came to my post-bag as an author, deserves whatever immortality this page can confer. It was addressed to my husband:—

"Dear Sir,—I must say I am very sorry My Dog should have caused you any trouble, and I don't realy know how he could have got anywhere near your place. I have three different jobs going just now and the Animal which is quite armless he is Bitten By other dogs, and I am almost incline to think this would be the case in this Instance even then I have not seen him do any grievious Arm to any dog yet you know as well as I do that dogs will snap one at the other and Ladies are rather encline to be nervus I am sorry to say and it realy makes more than sometimes is necessary, he is one of the Kindest dogs I have known and realy never attemps to atack any person and if he happens to miss me on one Job he goes on to another and so on till he eventuly finds where I am and I suppose in one of these rounds he happened to get into this trouble and another thing bein a Bull dog his Looks dose not Pitty Him but he realy is anything but a verocius Animal, and if you know him you must say so and the smallest child can do whatever they like and no Arm comes of it. Anyway I will do my best to keep him within Bounds and I hope your dog is not Hurt.

"Yours faithfully,
"M. J. Budge."

Needless to tell we wrote off at once that we altogether forgave the bulldog, and so the matter ended happily.

As we are on the subject of dogs I must quote from some letters of a countryman of mine from whom I have occasionally bought an Irish terrier puppy. I will say for him that he breeds a good one, and I can heartily recommend him.

"I am Know dog-dealer," he writes, "but I just keep one Dame which I bred myself severall times I have refused big offers to sell her but money would not purchase her from me. However if you see what suits you don't let words of mine change your opinion. Now by Advt. you will have no trouble in getting one perhaps a wastrel that is useless to the breader and worse to the purchaser. The reputation of Sire and Dame of these puppies I expect there will be great demand for them. Therefore let them turn out as they may I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that the are the best bread litter of puppies—Irish Terrier—that ever was bread in this country of Ireland or perhaps the world. . . . As I informed you I am know Dog dealer. No doubt you will get a cheap Terrier pup by Advt. off those dealers that is no use to Anybody nor themselves. . . . If you agree to take one my Lowest price is £2. You look round you for the next few weeks if you see what suits you at your price if not I will keep you a good honest pup."

Another letter says :—

"I am sorry to hear your pup was poisoned. We all happen with this mistake at some time or other. As a rule the fonder you are of them or the more valuable the are, them is the one that lifts it. He promised to make a good dog. Now I may tell you our first-class Animals finds their way to other lands if money can purchase them. £580 would not induce Mr. Breakey to part with this dog. On the Show bench during the passed 4 years he never knew Defeat. I have went to trouble and great expense to breed good ones. My price for these pups will be Three Ginnies. If you like I might be able some time to pick you up a fair pup at 25 or 30 shillings which might do you as well."

The bargain for the second puppy was finally concluded, and a portion of the letter upon the deal may be found interesting. There is something Homeric in an Irishman's description of an Irish terrier.

"Now there is three colours of Irish Terrier, Wheaten, Wheaten Red and Golden Red. And the Golden Red is the best of all. When I got your letter I had sold the Wheaten one. I wrote to this man to say I would give him the wheaten pup for 25*s*. or the Golden Red for 30*s*. You can see by his letter he wanted this pup I am sending you. I would want myself to let you have it. If this man will not take a bitch pup he can do without one. I am confident sure I am giving you a good one, if I thought it was a bad one I would let someone else have it as I could sell six."

The writer receives many suggestions of collaboration. Here is a very *naïf* one :—

"Dear Madam,—For some time I have been thinking of writing to ask you if you would help me write a Book. I want to make some money for a good purpose and I think perhaps the Story of my Life would be acceptable.

"Don't think it strange that I should make this request. I have heard from everybody that you are *kindness* itself."

On inquiring further I found that the lady had: "Story. Lord, bless you! I've none to tell, sir." So the proposed collaboration fell to the ground.

Again I had the offer of collaboration from a Hindu Babu. He was to supply the plots and I was to write up the stories. He also offered to supply local colour. I asked him to send some plots, though hardly with the idea of collaborating, but they were like the plots you dream of, which are so very wonderful at the time and are nothing at all by the cold light of day.

One day a letter reached me with the weird address :—

"To the left family of
Madam Kathrine Tynan."

It was from a Norwegian parsonage. The lady wrote :—

"As I should like very much to translate for one Scandinavian paper published in Norway, Denmark and Sweden your charming and splendid-told nouvellette A Bit of Scandal, I take the liberty to ask this favour of you.

"As the literary circumstances here are so widely different from yours, as almost all papers and publications pirate what they want and the fee of translation is as low as a little less than one quart of a peny for a printed line then the fee I can offer you is very very low indeed.

"I were ashamed to offer it had not many many authors honoured me with their confidence so I have the great satisfaction and pleasure to represent a good deal of them and have the honour to protect their works in these three Northern Countries.

"I shall not translate your story for more than three papers and might return you your rights after two years. But as I can only offer you one half-pound for this favour you may find it so ridiculous low that you will laugh only at the whole I fear.

"With sincere apologies for my liberty, ——."

A postscript explained the queer address :

"To my grief I have found that so gifted and fine mind and talent is no more. I found this trist fact in the year book. O how I grieve. Will her left family give me the permission I ask !"

I wrote explaining that I was still in this Vale of Tears, giving the permission she asked and suggesting that she should send instead of the "half-pound" a little cotton Norwegian dress for my small daughter, which would cost but a few shillings. We had at the time a Swedish parlourmaid who waited at dinner when she did wait, and opened the door in her national costume of bright colours, dazzling the visitor, especially the male visitor—and I wanted something as pretty.

I heard no more either of the Norwegian dress or the "half-pound." Perhaps my resurrection was too much for the lady.

I have heaps more in my post-bag. But I will content myself with one specimen of the rap over the knuckles which an author so often receives.

"'Her Mother's Daughter,' By Katharine Tynan.

"'The nurse who was in charge had gone down to *her eleven o'clock light refreshment* in the *Servants' hall.*'

"Nurses *do not feed in the Servants' hall*, you unthinkingly do harm and give a wrong impression by statements such as above which frequently occur in your books, the majority of trained nurses are educated women of the middle class.

"A short time ago I required the services of a nurse, the question arose as to where the creature would feed, not having had a nurse before I had not the least idea. 'Oh,' said one of my friends, 'put her in the housekeeper's room, according to this book (meaning yours) she will be happy there.' Nurse had a sense of humour and accepted the situation; we afterwards found out she was a relative of a friend of ours and that it was the first time she had been asked to feed below-stairs. I believe they usually prefer feeding alone, but that is of course according to the circumstances of patient, etc."

CHAPTER XX

DICKENS PERSONS AND OTHERS

The mention of the Swedish parlourmaid at the end of the last chapter brings to my mind the long series of domestics who served me and left me, very often of their own will, by reason of my driving them on too slack a rein. Driving is indeed a highly unsuitable word. I left them to themselves, and I have reason to believe that that induces in many English domestic servants a moral discomfort akin to the physical discomfort of being deprived of a corset, having long worn one. I remember now that my servants were addicted to the practice of "having a good cry," somewhat disproportionally so.

Some few loved me and were faithful to me, but left me too soon to be married, by reason of the facilities I afforded them of seeing their young men. Many thought me a noodle. Now and again I was a pigeon for the plucking, and one or two thought me no class because I had no carpet on my bedroom, or for some such reason.

I have long believed that the chief cause of the servant trouble in our days is that the mistress cannot or will not rule. Our grandmothers married at sixteen, reared large families, and were as the Valiant Woman of the Scriptures—if they did not die early from wearing low-necked frocks and sandal shoes in their innocent girlhood through all the inclemencies of the island winter. They worked with their servants; they learned in some marvellous way to rule them even in tender girlhood;

their vocation was housecraft and maternity. Whereas we, with a vocation or tastes that take us quite beyond the domestic circle, leave our unhappy domestics "slithering" all over the place, uncontrolled, without law or order, in a freedom worse to them than the comfortable rule of old. We of the islands are losing the secret of housecraft. We are making fast for co-operative kitchens and all the rest of it. But let us not blame our unguided, undirected, uncontrolled dependants. Let us ask ourselves how a regiment, a factory, any other concern in the world, could be run without control or guidance, before we shift the blame from our own shoulders.

The Swedish parlourmaid was one of my desperate expedients. She was not a common person. She was the daughter of a pastor, and her ostensible reason for being in domestic service in England was that she wanted to acquire the language: the real reason was probably because her *fiancé* was in London. She held out no hope to me that her sojourn in my household would be anything but fleeting. Still, I had learned to be grateful for short reprieves and not look beyond the day. She promised to be invaluable. The letter of the lady who recommended her left room only for one doubt: if one could keep such a marvel of efficiency would one willingly resign her to another?

Fröken was certainly very picturesque with her shining fair hair and bright complexion in the gay Swedish dress.

It was at this time a *mènage* of ladies. There was a lady cook; and there was the invaluable Hilda—who, being really a lady, thought nothing in the way of housecraft beneath her. The cook came to us from a place where they trained ladies for domestic service. Hilda only made one remark, "She won't be able to cook anything but Swiss roll and ——." I have forgotten the second dish; but Hilda was confident that the pupils at the School of Housewifery could only cook those two things.

I prepared delicately for the lady domestics. The kitchen was made like the kitchen of a Kate Greenaway picture. Two little basket armchairs stood either side the fireplace. There were floral window curtains, a rug which could be rolled up and laid down, flowers in pots, a pretty table-cover. The bedrooms were made equally pretty. Then Fröken and the lady cook arrived.

I gave them tea in the drawing-room on their first coming and made them free of the piano and the novels. They never had time for the piano or the novels. They spent the days piteously chasing after the work which they were unable to catch up with. The first evening the cook made soup of the hyacinth bulbs. The next morning she complained that the Grape-Nuts would not thicken, no matter how long she boiled them, and was amazed when we drew her attention to the black warning hand and " Will NOT cook " on the packet. That afternoon she cheerfully took charge of the children for half an hour while Hilda went to the shops, giving them the carving-knife to play with. Only a providential interposition of someone prevented a kitchen chair becoming a headsman's block. After the second day she delegated most of her duties to the boy who did the boots, who resented the injustice of the delegation and paid her out by not coming on Sundays, when we used to wake to the piteous bleating of Fröken and the cook at Hilda's door. " Oh, please, please, the boy hasn't come, and who is to light the fires ? "

Fröken during her short four weeks in the house broke all the breakable things under her hand. She was always coming with the ruins of something very dear. "I haf broke it. It slipped my fingers between. And now I fear it is a memory." It always was a memory.

The third or fourth evening there was a knock at the door just as Fröken carried in the soup to the dinner-table. She started. It was a mercy she had the presence of mind to put down the soup tureen before she began to tremble so excessively. "It is my *fiancé*," she said, and fled out of the room, and we saw her no more that evening. She and the *fiancé* took possession of the schoolroom, evicting the lawful occupiers, and it was a place of low murmurs till the *fiancé* left at 10 o'clock.

I know my lady domestics never occupied the cushioned chairs. They never availed themselves of the freedom of the piano and the bookcase with the novels. If they had not a young man in the drawing-room of afternoons they lay upon their beds in a collapsed state.

For a day or two, the invaluable Hilda being unavoidably absent, Fröken was in charge of the nursery, where confusion reigned supreme. The bath-hour was pandemonium. Fröken explained certain black marks on the children's arms by saying that her hand was so weak she had to grip. We were not sure that in one case, at least, it did not mean pinches. That was the case of a very dear little girl of four, whose eyes were habitually what is known as saucers, from the zest and the wonder she brought to the looking-out on the world—"all for to see and to admire." The said little girl at the dining-room lunch was very indiscreet as to the garments Fröken wore under the national costume. "Mother, Fröken wears a blue . . . " the revelation would begin, while Fröken would gasp under her breath something that sounded like "Ach, dear

Heaven!" and someone would promptly squelch the rest of the speech. But presently the voice would pipe up again: "Mother, Fröken has a 'normous lot of petticoats." We noticed that Fröken's "weak grip" had certainly fallen on that small arm.

During Hilda's absence a terrible odour became apparent in the kitchen regions, and grew and grew and could not be traced to its source. We had arrived at the point of suspecting dead rats behind the wainscotting when Hilda returned and promptly ran the smell to earth. It was only the shrimp sauce from one Friday being saved over for the next.

Such experiments drove me back to the professional domestics with a readiness to forgive the past and hope for the future, which springs up again no matter how often disappointed. But it was with those experimental domestics that I had my most interesting experiences and my most unmitigated failures.

There was Rose, who called herself a lady yet asked for no more than the condition of a servant. When Rose arrived,—she had been engaged for me by a faithful friend who had as high a heart as myself in those adventures or misadventures—I was somewhat startled. She was wearing a very smartly made costume of white cloth—it was the fashion just then to affront the smuts-laden atmosphere of wintry London by garments of pure white. She wore a wide hat of black velvet. That and her face were swathed up in a voluminous white veil dotted over with large black spots. Through the veil were apparent the brightness of her eyes and the cloudiness of her hair. She was beautiful and young within the veil. Clear of it she was a little old spinster with the bright eyes of madness.

For a while we were in clover. The madness was a driving force that compelled Rose to keep going. There was nothing she disdained to turn her hand to. I have a mental picture of her washing the front gate in a November fog. She cooked like a *cordon bleu.* She drove the young parlourmaid under her as unrelentlessly as she drove herself. She adored her employers, She was scrupulously honest and careful.

The fatal day came when she had her day out. She had burnt her hand very badly with boiling fat and was obviously in great pain, but she would go out. That evening she was brought home by two young gentlemen —really of the very fine young gentlemanhood of England. They had found Rose wandering about half-off her head with pain and had played the part of good Samaritans. "Her poor hand has been most dreadfully burnt," the elder boy said softly. I interviewed them in a dimly lit hall. They would not come in. They thought Rose was young and a member of the family. I had been deceived myself. The bright eyes and the cloudy hair inside the veil gave a tantalising and deceptive hint of beauty. They had only seen her in the night and the ill-lit roads. They hovered about, a little anxiously. Ought they to go for a doctor? Was there nothing they could do? Finally they went off half-unwillingly, taking their golden heads away out of the dimly lit hall, leaving it dimmer. There was a half-suggestion that they might call again to see if she was easier. I did not encourage them. I let them go with their illusion.

On a later occasionRose in her wonderful garments— I had discovered that she bought the wardrobe of a fashionable young lady—was brought home again: this time by a gentleman of more mature years. She was fortunate in her protectors. He thought she was quite insane, which she was, and was troubled at the idea of leaving me to cope with her, the master of the house being away, and only a couple of women in the house.

He looked so kind and anxious as he turned to go, upon my assurance that I was fully equal to the situation. He would have stayed on a word, but he went when the word was not given, and he came back to ask if he could send someone, some friend, some neighbour. He was one of our fellow-strangers and pilgrims upon earth, with whom one touches and parts company for ever; the kind people one has met travelling, or at some turn of the road; from whom one has received courtesy and kindness—and then farewell. I could make a litany of them. There was the one who—but I will not. They have nothing to do with my experiments. Wherever they may be, be it returned to them a thousand-fold!

A little later poor Rose's squalid secret was out. We made a somewhat determined effort to reclaim her. But she was not conscious of sin.

"Anything else, my dearest lady, you ask of me! but my dear sainted mother, who is now in Heaven, used to say to me, 'Rose, if you feel faint take a little brandy and water and an Abernethy biscuit.' If I was to do as you wish—and indeed there are few things I would not do to please you—I should feel that I was turning my back on that precious parent. And the ordeal, my dearest lady! All very well for the common and unrefined. But for a lady like me . . ."

Of course she was a Dickens character—a sort of Miss Flyte. How the Master would have loved her ignoring of the cheery greetings of the tradespeople's young men and the messenger boys! It was only later that we knew of the occasion when she stalked before the sweep, in extreme undress, candle in hand, in the black hours of the morning. What a picture it would have made, Rose and the black man, to whom she disdained to speak while she introduced him to his chimneys.

Rose fluttered off into the sea of life without warning one night and we heard of her no more. She was the only domestic we ever had who brought us fresh relays of toast during breakfast and who gave us so tender an adoration.

The "ladies" were a weird lot—as were sometimes the professionals. Once we had a man and wife. The man was an inventor and had got through the savings of both.

"I'm a beautiful cook," said the wife, when she came to be interviewed, "though I've nothink of an appearance, but you'd better see Simmons before you say no to us. He *is* a brainy one. Only for bad luck and them City sharks we'd be as rich as rich."

Simmons had no doubt. "I may say that I've never been beaten in my life in anythink wot I've undertook. Them there patents now . . ."

We soon learned that it was necessary to extinguish Simmons when he got on to the patents. Mrs. Simmons was, as she said, a beautiful cook. She had borne the burden of Simmons and the patents by going out as a job cook, and was plainly exhausted when she came to us. For six days we enjoyed the beautiful cooking. On the seventh, in the grey dark of a December morning in the suburb, we heard Simmons's voice at Hilda's door. "Miss B——, Miss B——, I want to speak to you."

Simmons's voice was husky with distress and agitation.

"Open the door then and speak," came Hilda's voice. Hilda had no nonsense about her.

"'Opes I knows my place better," said Simmons, in a shocked croak.

It was Mrs. Simmons who "couldn't get her breath."

Very like it was the ammonia, she thought. She had felt the cold chill strike to her heart when she entered our doors.

"Wot with 'aving the windows open somethink crool." What with the change of climate from the Caledonian Road—Mrs. Simmons talked of the Caledonian Road as though it were the Riviera—"in these yere country places the wind bites."

It was not "the ammonia," but Mrs. Simmons had a very bad cold. She lay up for a week while somebody else did her work. Now I look back to that time, it was always a substitute who "did" for us. The real Simon Pure was laid up, or had taken herself off at a moment's notice, or had been requested to make a sudden departure.

The house in those days was haunted by Simmons's husky whispers. Obviously he had never been a manservant, but he said he had, and he thought he acted the part when he spoke in a crow's voice. He followed me upstairs when I visited the invalid. There on the wall hung a large shiny advertisement "Simmons's Patent Lamp Extinguisher." It was their relic of former glories, of high hopes and aspirations, and it went with them wherever they went.

I commented on it and heard Simmons's croak just behind me.

"Only one of them there patents of mine," he said with modest pride. "There's nine in all:—No. 1, Simmons's Patent Fish Clip for Dishin' up Fish. No. 2, Simmons's Patent Sink Cleaner by Exhaust Pump Process. No. 3, Simmons's Patent Three Gloves and Powder in a Box for Plate Cleanin'. No. 4, Simmons's Patent Bottomless Egg Spoon. There were money in that only . . . "

"Man, go and answer the 'all door bell," said Mrs. Simmons, pointing a skinny finger at him.

There were times when Mrs. Simmons seemed to have a sudden realisation of her man's futility, and at those moments Simmons would scurry before his wife's eye. But their usual position towards each other was that of unquestioning admiration on her part and calm acceptance on his.

While she lay in bed she fretted over the kitchen with Simmons loose in it.

" Simmons, 'e is a brainy man," she said, " but lor, mum, will you see as he keeps 'is 'ands off that there kitchen range or 'e'll be tryin' some of 'is notions on it."

We got enough of Simmons's " notions " in those days. We learned to dread the word " patent." Simmons was always waylaying us.

" This yere patent stopper of your 'ot water bottle must 'ave made a mint o' money. I did somethink in that way myself."

" This yere patent mouse-trap. The man wot invented it must 'a bin on 'is last legs, an' I'll tell you w'y."

Waiting at table he breathed so hard behind your chair that he made your hair stand up. He used to keep a respectful distance while he handed your plate, and in the effort to steady himself he gripped your shoulder.

" I'll tell you something," said someone irascibly, " that will be worth a hundred pounds to you in your profession."

" Certainly. sir. Yes, sir. Wot I don't know about patents . . . " Simmons replied, leaning heavily on the shoulders nearest to him.

" Don't snore as you stand behind people's chairs, and try to keep your hands off their shoulders."

" Yes, sir ; certainly, sir ; very much obliged."

I have a vivid memory of going into my kitchen to find Simmons, his head wrapped up in a towel, inhaling the friar's balsam which was intended for his wife.

"What on earth are you doing there?" I asked. "You haven't a cold, have you?"

A steamy face emerged and there came Simmons's croak, an injured one this time.

"A man's cold may be as bad as a woman's," he said, "and wot's good for a woman is good for a man."

"There," said Mrs. Simmons, looking round from the kitchen range. "I never see such a man. . . . I can't 'ave a complaint but wot 'e's got it too."

Have I not said that London is still full of Dickens characters?

There were others. There was the little nurse, with brown hair thick and close as the plumage of a bird just gently rippled over and faithful brown eyes. She was a born nurse. She came to a very delicate baby. Her old mother, a true Dickens type of Londoner, came with her at her first interview and peered at the sick baby.

"Oh, Annie, you'll have to take great care of him," she said.

The little girl would have reared any baby. She had some kind of touch with the tiny shivering soul of the very young baby which even the mother may find it impossible to reach. How to comfort, to console the small soul in its mysterious fastnesses? "There! There!" the little nurse used to say, patting the sick baby against her childish breast, and the wail that broke the mother's heart to hear would be soothed into wholesome sleep. I have a picture of the nurse, her long dark hair about her face and streaming over her nightgown, while she rocked in her arms a fretful child. She used to say that if she was not a nurse to young children she would like to look after very old people. "Other people," she said, "are impatient with their little ways and fancies. But I should love to give in to them and humour them."

She was a tower of strength in the nursery. I remember the big London doctor's glance at her. He was not then as big a man as he was afterwards to become, or he would not have been our doctor. "She is a born nurse," he said, watching with approval her deft undressing and dressing of the baby. Yet she was a true Londoner. Dickens would have loved her. She used to say that she was born at the Uxbridge Road Station, a statement not to be taken literally. She looked at you with a shy, quick, upward look that reminded you of a bird's from under her lashes, which were so thick as to be like fur. She brought me a letter once from her mother dealing with the entry into my establishment of nurse's sister as nursery-maid. It was soon after Queen Victoria's death. The mother's letter wound up, the mere business being concluded—

> "Have you heard of the Queen's death and what do you think of it ?
>
> "Yours truly,
> "Mrs. Sykes."

With the person whom the children called the Nursery Governor—on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, for she was incapable of governing anything—I shall not deal at length. She was a dormouse, and only asked to be allowed to sleep at any and every time, even when a child's life might depend on her keeping awake. I ought not to have said every time, for she did not sleep when she ought to, and would rise and make the poor babies rise hours before anyone was about to light fires. She would sit huddled in a shawl before a black grate while the children played with their toys on a cold floor in the morning dusk. She was faultlessly inefficient. Once I was amazed to find that she had a sense of humour. She laughed richly over the long conversations between Two-years-Old and Three-Years-Old, which began with the first peep of day and went on interminably. It was like the chatter of birds in the dark house. The humour of it was that they understood each other so perfectly while no one else could understand a word.

Through her ineptitude the children met with an adventure. She took the three babies for an afternoon walk on a grey October day and meandered on, comatose as usual, till she found herself and her charges in an unfamiliar country road. She asked the eldest child, five years old, if it would take them home, and he answered, quite truthfully, that it would, omitting to mention that it was about five miles of a loop into the darkening fields before they reached the houses again. So she pushed on with the mail-cart, the boy of five stepping out sturdily; and presently they were enveloped in the creeping fog and were lost.

She remarked to me afterwards complacently: "My sister was once out in a governess cart with a lot of small children when the horse bolted. My sister fainted, so she was all right. She never knew what had happened till she was brought to and then all the danger was over."

"I wonder I didn't faint," she added, of the adventure in the fog.

What she did do was to bawl lustily. And of course the children bawled too. Before the lady could faint a farm cart loomed up out of the fog. The driver was a young man whose face she could not see. He pulled up and asked what was the matter. On hearing he at once offered to take the party home. He lifted the two small boys into the cart, making them as comfortable as he could. The Inefficient One followed with the mail-cart and the sleeping baby. And off they went through the fog, growing ever thicker, through the lonesome country, by the long winding lane, and back among the houses again, never pausing till they arrived at the house where the distracted parents awaited them.

" We all cried because we had lost home," said Five-Years-Old flying to the arms of his parents. Oh, the dear home-comings there used to be—from thunderstorms, and the night, and such desperate things, when the lights of home meant sanctuary and shelter. Once it was a little girl sickening for influenza and flying, flying for home, away from the friends who would have kept her. Another time it was a small Great Heart who had gone across the fields to see a little girl home, and coming back, was met by wild showers of hail and an ominous sky and the overspreading night, through which he could hardly see that light in the high bathroom window toward which his heart was uplifted. Oh, many and many a time the light of home beaconed them and they fled to it ; and many and many a time, please God, they will again !

But when we turned that evening to look for the friend in need, lo and behold he was gone, and no one had seen his face ! What do you make of it ? Do you think it a likely thing that an ordinary farm cart, driven by an ordinary farm hand, would trundle all those five miles through the darkness and fog to bring home the lost children, and having done so, depart without reward ?

I want to know—is there any saint in the calendar who was a farm boy ? And as I ask the question I remember that St. Patrick herded the sheep for Milcho, his cruel master. Three little Irish children ! And the Saint was drawn to Ireland by the crying of the Irish children. Why, there it is, as plain as print !

CHAPTER XXI

SOME OF OUR VISITORS

Life flowed very quietly during those years after the South African War. We only realise now how little that war affected the mass of people by the contrast of these days when the Great War is affecting everybody. Its echoes died away. Now and again something of it cropped up. In an Irish country house where we used to stay was a boy with beautiful grey eyes and thick dark lashes, a very good-looking boy indeed, the son of a broken-down West of Ireland landlord. He had been in the Irish Hunt Contingent which was captured in a body at Lindley. He told us that De Wet said humorously when they were brought before him: "What is the use of bringing me these fellows? If I hung up a leg of mutton in a farmhouse I could catch them by the hundred. Take them away?"

Again we went for a week-end in Surrey and found there a couple of young Boers, law students at the Inns of Court. One was a big, fair, stolid-looking Boer with a premature patch of baldness atop of his head. The second one was dark and slender, somewhat fine-looking: fire in his eye as he talked, a suggestion of latent strength. I wonder where he is to-day.

The party included some very vivacious and pretty girls, to whom we naturally allotted the young Boers, with other young men of the party, while we went our sober middle-aged way, avoiding the young people. On our way back from the walk—we had delayed deliberately—we came upon the two young Boers talking to a number of farm horses which, on that beautiful May evening, had just been turned out to grass. We watched the scene for a few minutes, unobserved; and it was as pretty a thing as ever I saw. The horses apparently knew their friends and lovers, for they were fighting to get to them. The long heads were hung over the high white gate. The young Boers were going from one to the other, hugging the heads in their arms, fondling them, kissing the sleek noses. When they became aware of our presence they looked at us with a shy apologetic smile. "Do you think us very silly?" said the slight dark one. "You don't know what it means to us. You see we are brought up with our horses, and in London we only see them at a distance—never to speak to."

They walked back with us. Wonder of wonders, they did not want the pretty girls. They wanted serious sober talk. Their minds were on high politics, the future of their people, their own destinies, war, patriotism, state-craft, religion, the arts.

We talked of these things till we were merged into the general company on our return to the house, and the Boers yielded themselves with a certain gravity to the allurements of the pretty girls.

Summer had given place to winter before we saw the dark young Boer again, and he came then to say farewell. It was the most miserable time of the year in London, January, with a slight drizzle and the ground covered with slimy mud. I remember that as we sat by the fire in our upstairs workroom, where rosy hangings from Liberty's made a fictitious warmth all the year, he said: "In three weeks time I shall be among the apple orchards in bloom."

All our talk that evening was of the war, and he told me many interesting things.

One evening E. F. Knight came to dinner for the first, but not the last time. He had carried an empty sleeve since the South African War. He is a man who talks little of his own doings. That evening he was more expansive. He told us a story of himself and Sir Frederick Treves. He was lying in the field hospital, one of many with gangrened wounds. Things had broken down terribly. The supply of antiseptics had failed. Treves came to the hospital. He looked at one doomed man after another, passing without a word. He paused by Knight's bed. "I'll have a look at him," he said. Knight opened his eyes. "Ever had chloroform?" "Yes, once, twice, thrice—four times, I think. But I prefer a special brand"—naming the formula. "This fellow may do," said Treves. "I'll have the arm off." And he did, and Knight lived to tell the tale. "Your merry heart goes all the way."

Again we were in Ireland for the night of the Big Wind, which will be as famous in Irish history as its predecessor of 1839. I can remember that in my childhood very old people still dated things by the Rebellion of 1798. "He was ten years old the year of the Rebellion." Later the Big Wind of 1839 became the landmark. Someone told me once that her mother was taking tea with the parish priest of her particular parish on the day of the Big Wind, which was, I think, a Sunday. Father Morris, one of the old cultivated priests who used to go to Douai and Louvain, Paris and Rome, where now the priests go to Maynooth, had brought home from his travels the very first umbrella seen in those parts. The young lady had fallen out with her sweetheart, and the priest had been trying to reconcile them, without success. The young man had turned up quite by accident and the tea had been a somewhat constrained function. Then came the rain against the window and the first mutterings of the hurricane. The good priest saw his opportunity. "Now, my children," he said, "there's a storm coming up, and the sooner you're on your way home, Mary, the better. I'll lend you my grand new umbrella to keep out the rain, but James will have to hold it over you, for you could never keep it up by yourself."

The umbrella would have covered a good-sized room. Unheeding Mary's protests that she could get home very well without it, he hustled the two off under the big umbrella, warning them to take great care of it and return it safely in the morning, since all the neighbours were coming to have a look at it and he did not like to disappoint them.

For a while there was not a word spoken under the umbrella, where Mary walked scornfully apart; but the wind was increasing in violence, and by the time they got up on to the cliff road it was blowing hard. Only then did they discover that they had forgotten to ask how to close the umbrella. They struggled with it till it all but carried them over the cliff, and, at last, they had to let it go. They had a most perilous journey home, for they dared not take shelter, since nearly every building and haystack and tree in the path of the Big Wind went down; and on the cliff road they could not stand up against the wind but had to go on all fours. However, in the end they did reach shelter, and by that time they were friends and lovers once more. But Father Morris never saw his umbrella again, although rumours reached them of a queer little boat that was not quite a boat, with a handle sticking up out of it, and it sailing away to America.

The Big Wind of 1903—it was the 26th of February—had been preceded by many stormy nights. That day there was a dead calm. We noticed the strange stillness as we came down from the mountains where we had been walking, just as the twilight was gathering about us. There was not a sound, not a breath, not a movement. The world might have been a picture, so dead was it.

We had been called over to Ireland to see my beloved old father, who had arrived at the beginning of the end. After dinner we were playing cards, when the wind began to come in sharp, sudden gusts and die away again. "It has been like that all the winter," said my sister; "I never knew as stormy a winter."

When we went to bed there was a pretty big storm on. We were sheltered from the west, the way the storm travelled, the house being in a valley under Belgard Hill. I have known the wind very bad in that cup of the valley. An hour after we went to bed sleep was impossible, save to one person, who should have made the Eighth Sleeper, who grumbled all through the Big Wind because he was not allowed to sleep by the restlessness of others.

We were in the full fury of the tornado. The old trees, which had survived the other Big Wind, snapped like sugar-sticks in this one. Twenty or more forest trees fell in the immediate vicinity of the house, fortunately just missing it, and we never heard them fall. The screaming of the wind drowned all other sounds. Now and again we could detect a different sound, the wind tearing up the corrugated iron roofing of some farm buildings and flinging it far away into the fields. Through the shuttered windows sand and straws were driven and made a dust on the floor. We thought that every gust would lift the house and fling it about like a house of cards. I was sitting by my dear old invalid. At every fierce assault he said "Glory be to God, Kate, isn't it a great old house to stand that?" I was so grateful that I should have been with him that night.

The storm raged unabated till about 6 in the morning, when it began to moderate. The cold grey light of day showed us the wreck and ruin of the world. Everywhere there were trees and buildings down. Many buildings that still stood were unroofed. The whole face of the country was changed. We saw buildings we had never seen before and distant country where the woods had been. The Big Wind had blown down all that its predecessor had spared. It had taken a path across the country from West to East, leaving the North and South intact. As we went back to London the following week we saw the ruins of the breakwater at Holyhead, and signs of the storm were with us as we travelled through Wales. It must have spent itself before Chester was reached.

The roads were impassable for days. Many secrets were revealed. One tree that lay across the road had in a high fork of it an immense comb of wild bees' honey. It was very dark in colour, but otherwise quite good. The people were carrying it away in pails, while the bees, in an agitated mass, buzzed about, high up in the air where their hive had been.

In the Phœnix Park several hundred beautiful elm-trees were laid low, by which the Irish, if they were tree-planters, as they are not, might take warning not to plant the elm with its great branches and shallow roots in an exposed situation. The coffin-makers had a glut of elm that year. Correspondingly there was a famine in slates, but the big walnut tree in the Whitehall garden, which we all loved so dearly, had come up by the roots, bringing down with it a great stretch of wall and revealing a whole bed of slates set thickly one against the other where the roots had been.

It was a new pang to go away leaving such devastation. Now the little trees which planted themselves in the double-hedge of the orchard when I was a child have grown, and once more there is a tall screen of greenery around the place. The garden walls that fell with the trees were never rebuilt. My sister said to me the other day: "You remember how we could not grow strawberries in the garden long ago. There were many things that would not grow. The Big Wind changed all that. It let in the sun. The walls kept the garden cold."

So all great calamities have their uses. I certainly remember that old garden of box-borders, and apple-trees in all the vegetable beds, as a place darkly green, in which the great July lilies that came year after year stood up like young angels.

We went to Ockley, where we had found an inn to our mind, that summer of 1903. A summer earlier we had been beguiled to the North Coast of France by Professor York Powell, who went there year after year. In the big hotel in the fishing village I spent the most distasteful three weeks of my life. Bohemia was there, but there was also what we used to call haughtily, Brixton, in overwhelming numbers. We had looked for simplicity of life in the inn of a fishing village. We found a caravanserai, where people dressed for dinner and spent meal-times in trying to snatch enough food from a supply which had become exiguous, because of overcrowding and too great a strain on the resources of the place. There was no place for the children. They were resented and hustled hither and thither. Time was when French people had dominated the place, and to those days the *habitués* looked back with a sigh. The English had outnumbered the French and driven them away on a matter of open windows. "The English will take anything that is set before them," one of the Bohemians said bitterly, "so long as they may grumble."

So we snatched our food and accepted conditions of living which not one of us could have endured in England. We sat in a courtyard full of atrocious smells and said how picturesque it was. We gossiped about each other unkindly and were contemptuous of each other and each other's clothes. The poor babies! Only Marie, the old *bonne*, adored the babies. They had the worst accommodation the house afforded; they were the last to be considered in their food; and the other visitors resented their presence. I shall always remember with gratitude a tall boy who stopped on the stairs one day to ask pityingly what had happened to the baby girl, whose head was bandaged after a bad fall on her toy pail. I felt that I could have hugged him. No one else inquired. I used to wonder how English people, so kind at home, could so deteriorate in a few weeks abroad. To be sure there were rival camps in the hotel. There were the Bohemians and there were the people who dressed for dinner. One evening as we sat in the courtyard a tall dark young man, whom I took for a French artist, came into the courtyard carrying a tiny boy piggy-back on his shoulders. A couple of other children followed. "More babies!" said someone of the hostile camp, discontentedly.

I was feeling profoundly ill at ease among my surroundings. I was not yet in touch with the few Bohemians—with some I was never in touch—and their numbers were yet to be reinforced. I may as well confess that I had brought no smart clothes: I was a dowdy where all the women were dressing their best. A woman will understand what the situation meant, if a man does not.

The next morning when we were at breakfast in the courtyard "the French artist" came up to my table. "I believe, madam," he said, "that I have a story of yours to illustrate." It was John Hassall and no

Frenchman at all. What a joy he was in that friendless place! The next day, coming up from the sea, I found him buying a basket of grapes. Everyone was buying something for the teas to which people used to contribute. "For the tea?" I asked. "For you, madam, if you will accept them." Dear John Hassall!

When the children could not be out of doors they had to stay in the poky bedrooms which were only meant to be slept in, terribly confining to the little feet that wanted to run up and down. On Sunday mornings the salon was reserved, without asking anybody's leave, for a Church of England service; and if it was wet, and there were many wet Sundays, those who did not attend had to sit in their bedrooms. Public opinion was strong against the children using the salon, even when there was no one else there. One evening when I was very sore about some affront to the children John Hassall came to me. He used to spend all the wet days amusing his children in the bedroom that was too narrow to admit of guests. . . . "Feeling a bit down?" he asked. "I am miserable," I said. "Why do they hate the poor children?" "Never mind that," he said. "You and I are the rich people. We have the children, and they . . . " So he went on consoling me.

A little later there were other Bohemians. York Powell came; Dudley Hardy; Mrs. "Bob" Stevenson and her daughter. Things were altered; but the iron had entered into my soul. Musicians were there too—Cyril Scott; that year or the next Herbert Bunning and his beautiful French wife.

Mrs. Stevenson talked one day of "Louis" and the affection he had for a very ill-conditioned dog whom we shall call Dandy. I am not sure of the name. His owners were perpetually in trouble. He had bitten everybody, but Louis always defended him. One evening when

Louis lay ill in bed, Dandy sleeping as usual at the bed-foot, in a paroxysm of evil temper, without any cause that anyone could make out, suddenly attacked his master, who, taken by surprise, was quite defenceless. The dog had bitten him severely about the face before help came. "Oh, Dandy, Dandy!" said Stevenson. "I've always defended you against all the world. I can never defend you any more." So Dandy disappeared mysteriously, and his master asked no questions.

Many other stories I must have heard, for we saw a good deal of Mrs. Stevenson then and later, but they have dropped out of my memory.

Mrs. Stevenson had a very beautiful spinel ruby presented by the Emperor Nicholas of Russia to the Stevenson who was the lighthouse builder. She used to use it in various ways, but never as a ring. It would indeed have fitted the finger of a giant. It lay about on dressing-tables and in wardrobe trays at her little house in Chiswick. Perhaps the modest appearance of the house kept the London burglar from suspecting that it contained at least one jewel of price.

We left the hotel after three weeks and slipped back to our inn at Ockley, which we had found ideal a summer earlier. But the autumn was very wet. A few days after we had arrived in our peaceful haven—it was the most charming place imaginable—the measured tread of men's feet aroused my attention as I sat writing in our delightful sitting-room. I asked the waiting-maid, who happened to be in the room, what it was, without much interest in the reply. She answered that it was a funeral—poor old Mr. So-and-So, who had hanged himself in his woodshed. Going upstairs in the dusk of the evening to the bedroom in the gable—rather, the two bedrooms opening out of each other—a stick, accidentally hung on one of the oak-beams which supported the roof with its great Horsham slabs, wavered in the shadows like someone hanging. After that the pretty place was not the same.

I have not spoken of one visitor who came and went during those years—May Sinclair. Her work then had only reached the very few and discriminating. Some time early in 1899 my husband had found " Mr. and Mrs. Neville Tyson " in a bundle of review books from the *St. James's Gazette*. We were both struck by the quality of it.

The following summer I discovered " Miss May Sinclair " on the plan of the tables at the Women Writers' Dinner. I found her out and introduced myself. She came to see us afterwards, cycling down from Hampstead. She was a pretty refined-looking, mousy little girl, not in the least like what might be expected of the author of " Mr. and Mrs. Neville Tyson " and " Two Sides of a Question," the book of two long short stories which was so full of brilliant promise and performance. " The Divine Fire " was yet on the knees of the gods, and she had met with scant recognition in England. America had not yet even heard of her.

We became great friends. She dined with us pretty regularly at intervals of some weeks, and we used to go up to her rooms at Hampstead for a meal. She was and is very hospitable and generous. Even when she had no money she was free with it, to speak Irishly. She was and is a dear. No pettiness, no malice, no envy : there is a certain masculine quality of good fellowship and comradeship in this woman novelist. She used to run races on Hampstead Heath with a small boy, outstripping him, for she was swift as Atalanta. Once at dinner she handed round port wine that proved to be ketchup. We said it was because she herself never tasted wine. But she was so thorough in her work, going to no end of trouble to realise things and people so that her books should be true human documents, that she suggested to me a story of a lady novelist who, loathing any fermented drink, yet tried to make herself drunk so as to depict the sensation truthfully in one of her characters. She laughed when I told her that she had suggested the story.

She stayed with us sometimes for a few days or a week end. She was always perfectly modest about herself and her doings, although she made no pretence that her work was not well worth the doing. I looked on at the planning of much of "The Divine Fire." She debated the possibility, the probability, of the incidents with us one by one. She was delighted when she struck the title. I believe she made a special pilgrimage to Ealing to share the joy of the discovery with us.

We used to tramp the roads round by Perivale discussing "The Divine Fire." We were living then in our second house at Ealing. But we used to talk to her of the first little house with its associations of love and death. You shall find the house in "The Divine Fire," which, when it came, proved what we had known all along, that here was a novelist to be counted with.

America went mad over "The Divine Fire." Miss Sinclair was fêted and acclaimed when she visited her American publisher, up and down the United States. The fair Americans did things as extravagant as only they can do. Did I hear that at one of the feasts in Miss Sinclair's honour there was a place reserved for "Ricky" of "The Divine Fire" with a wreath of roses laid in it?

Miss Sinclair's silence amazed the Americans. Like Lionel Johnson, she had made a fine art of silence where she did not wish to speak. With us both of them were fluent talkers.

She was always amused at my way of working in the midst of the family circle, conversations going on all around me—sometimes a perfect hurly-burly of noise if the children happened to be present: I imitated Mrs. Meynell in this. I have a vivid picture of Alice Meynell writing one of her meticulously observant essays sitting by the table—the long green-painted table in the library at Palace Court—her hat on, just as she had come in, writing on a paper-pad in the midst of the whole household, with a few visitors added. I used to wonder at how she could abstract herself. Her look of travelling back from a long way off to answer a question and then losing herself again was wonderful. I, having conquered an inability to write when a tune was being played because, living in London, I could never, never hope to escape from barrel-organs, soon learned to write under any conditions. Many women writers have assured me that my way of working would break their hearts. My deplorable facility! But it is not in me to write with difficulty. I write easily or not at all; and to write not at all would be to sweep away *my* fabric of happiness, however little it would affect the outside world.

CHAPTER XXII

THE YOUNG CENTURY

During those English years I came to have a very deep delight in the beauty of the garden-like English country, to bring a fresh eye and a fresh love to the commons and woods and villages and downs of South-Eastern England. That ordered rich beauty, so different from the beauty of my own land, filled me with a quiet rapture. Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Worcestershire, laid hold upon my heart. During those years the last thing I thought of was that we should ever return to live in Ireland. Yet always in the fullest delight there was something of pain, something that said to me " It is not yours."

The beautiful cottages, the black and white house fronts of the old towns, the churches, the manor-houses, the farmhouses, the village greens with the white forms of the cricketers moving about on them in a brilliant summer sun, the old inns ; how delightful they all were!

I became very insular in those days—or perhaps I was always insular, and it was only a matter of widening my borders. We made several holidays to the north coast of France. I was always heartily rejoiced to get back. I had no desire to travel in those days: the islands contented me. I thought no one like the islanders, especially the island men. I cannot imagine how I came to be so insular.

Our second holiday on the French coast we had a *châlet* of our own in the street of the fishing village. It was called " Les Marguérites." It was charming, but highly inconvenient : this last was of course a later discovery. We were in love with the great hollyhocks that stood along the back of the house ; with the naked, clean French rooms ; with the low, long white house ; the floriated iron *grille* of the hall-door ; the windows opening all the way down ; the seats under the windows, in the street ; the difference between the plenishings and the English sort. It delighted us to hear the long-drawn-out salutations in the street of mornings and the songs the men sang at their work : you had only to shut your eyes and you might have been at the opera listening to the songs trolled out richly by the carpenter at his bench, or the mason building a wall, or the big fair butcher as he came and went. There was a true Gallic liveliness about that village. I used to say it reminded me of an Irish village for noise of all sorts—the Gallic cock-crowing, the hens cackling, the dogs barking, the ducks quacking, the people calling one to another. In summer days the village lived in the street, and so did we. Everyone who passed up and down from the hotel put their heads in at our open windows if they did not enter by our open door. Later on we discovered that the carpenter's shop opposite—the carpenter bore the highly satisfactory name of Gaston Galant—shut out all the afternoon sun ; that in a place where veal was the principal, almost the only meat, it was painful to watch the gyrations of the little calves in their vain efforts to escape being driven into the butcher's yard ; that flies abounded and with cause ; that the one whose bedroom opened picturesquely on the hollyhocks had to sleep when the rain came on under an open umbrella ; that—oh ! there were several drawbacks. But drawbacks are good when you are on holiday. If the holiday were too good you might not want to go home again ; whereas, if you go home from drawbacks with great joy, to a clean, new-furbished house, showing the first fire of autumn on its welcoming hearth, you have the benefit in a way of two holidays.

How one pitied those who did not go home. There was a couple at the hotel typical of a class—the English who do not go home. The coast towns of Northern France are full of them. Usually they have left their country for their country's good : you see them in the casinos, hawk-faced, with predatory fingers. Odd, is it not, that they sit down there within sight of the England to which they cannot return ?

This couple were quite different. A small Yorkshire squire who had dipped his property to the neck in a wild-goose chase after minerals ; an Irish wife, a tall, thin woman, in whom you could see the bonniness of the wild Irish girl, full of sport and laughter, game to the last. They always hoped that some day they might go Home : what the word means in such a connection as that ! Meanwhile they wandered up and down the Continent, staying at the cheap hotels, childless—a pair of withered leaves blown about by the wind of circumstance. While they were together it was not hard for her to be as merry as the leaves you may watch running and skipping on a dark autumn road. But some time the wind of Death would spring up and blow them one from the other. One always hoped she would be the last to go. The gallant spirit of her race still bubbled up in her. She walked with a swing, carried herself with an air. None could mistake her for anything but what she was—" a blood lady," as I have heard a peasant say. She would give away her trinkets to those who admired in the old Irish way. She had beautiful things in the way of antique jewellery that made the modern jewels common.

If she went to Boulogne for a few hours, his was presently a grey anxious face peering round the corner of the last house in the village the way down she should return. She laughed at him and loved him. Once she told me of the days of their courtship and the pranks played by her brothers on the sedate young English lover. One could reconstruct it all—the wild gay life, far back in the past, when none could have foreseen the drifting up and down the Continent, winter after winter, summer after summer, with never a hearthstone of their own to sit down by.

The third summer we went to that coast it was further on towards Calais. We were one of a trio of friendly establishments: the Dudley Hardys at one *châlet*—"Qui Si Sano" by name; we at the "Villa Marthe;" the Bunnings at the third, the name of which I have forgotten. Villa Marthe was at the edge of the sea. When there was a bit of wind, if you opened the door to admit a friend ever so cautiously, all the lights in the house were blown out. When there was no wind you could leave all open.

We were just away from the village, we three friendly establishments. Ours wrote, Dudley Hardy painted, Herbert Bunning composed music. What beautiful things Dudley Hardy painted!—twilight things of dawn and evening: a haystack in the grey fields of dawn had all the mystery and poetry of dreams about it—French interiors, men and women in the fields, fisher-folk. One used to anathematise the fate which had turned him to poster-work and to mere cleverness of dancing girls and the like. Life does odd and cruel things with us sometimes. You saw the real Dudley Hardy in these pictures, something simple and poetic, with a soul of tenderness. He used to walk about the big upstairs studio, painting and telling you that he was so happy that he could hardly keep himself from shouting and singing out of pure joy. This was a Dudley Hardy of whom the Sketch Club and the *Sketch* public knew nothing.

The wife who meant so much to him—the generous, wild Irishwoman whom he was so soon to lose—used to come in and look at his work and approve or disapprove. She was his tribunal.

We had for our own the wide stretch of sandy dunes between the houses, where the sparse grass crackled under your feet because of the load of tiny snail-shells each grass-blade bore. As we came up from bathing we bought our fish from the fishermen. After breakfast we sat on the steps of the Bunnings' *châlet* and received the ladies who came to sell us supplies. Mrs. Bunning, who was French, used to enjoy the game of bargaining. Time after time the enraged, white-capped women would gather up their live stock, their vegetables, their fruit, and depart—only to return. What a picture it would have made. The poor live stock—the beautiful white geese held by the feet, their gold bills trailing in the dust; the hens, trussed up anyhow in the baskets; the brown-faced, white-capped women; the beautiful colour of the fruit and vegetables, the silver of the fish; and then the purchaser—one did the purchasing—her handsome, beautifully-coloured, high-bred face alight with the fun and the excitement of the bargaining. "You beat us down to the last sou," cried the justly exasperated dames. "You see I am a Frenchwoman and—more than that, I am a Bretonne," she answered triumphantly.

We sufficed for each other that summer. The hotel, packed as usual to the roof with British citizens, was far enough away to let us be. We dined with each other all round the weeks. Our establishment had a very good French cook. We thought of carrying her off to

England, but on further acquaintance it did not seem desirable. "But, Madame," said Jeanne, flabbergasted, "I come to cook Madame's dinner! It is enough. I cook a very good dinner. I am an artist. Madame does not engage me for my morals!"

It was all very gay, very pleasant, very kind and companionable. But that was a sad year for me. In the previous winter John O'Mahony had died. We were quite sure we should never replace that wild spirit of laughter, that generous giver. We never did. He left an empty place.

As often happens after a long period of immunity, some of those we cared most for began to drop away from us. Earlier in that summer of 1905 I had lost my friend Mrs. Gill, and she too left an empty place; for we had been close friends for twenty years, and I could go to her house as to my own. It was a house I always entered without knocking at the door, and if she was not there to receive me I used to look for her through the big comfortable house till I found her. There never were more warm arms than hers to receive a friend. But if she happened to be out I knew it at the threshold.

At Audreselles that summer I was playing bridge one day when I was called away. It was to tell me that my father was dead. So there were three of my links with life snapped off within the year.

I have spoken of my father in "Twenty-five Years," and also many times in my poems. He had failed rapidly for one of his strong vitality and energy. He had come to be a gentle old man, very grateful for love and kindness shown to him and disliking violence of any sort, he who had been like the west wind entering a house in the old days.

I treasure the memory of him as he was when he died, but, some time after his death, that phase of him seemed to pass away out of my mind, and I keep the memory of him as he was in the days of our comradeship—strong dominant, kind, fearless, true.

I have happened at this moment to light on a packet of John O'Mahony's letters from which I should like to make a few extracts. They tell just what he was doing then, working, jesting, giving, enjoying—all with a zest which many a one has never tasted in the course of a long robust life. He was writing to another barrister who would be interested professionally, apart from other things, in his doings. Here is one headed only "THURLES, Thursday." Unlike many of my Irish correspondents, he was usually accurate in dating—a rather unexpected thing.

"I have been defending more patriots here. The weather is grand; the country beautiful under the Devil's Bit. I find the people as entertaining as ever. I went to see Dr. Croke to-day. He is failing fast, but still a fine old fellow. He said a lot of interesting things and told me stories of old times and the priests worth remembering. If I don't forget I'll tell you some day. He said a man called on an old priest one night late for a sick call. The old priest was annoyed at his coming so late and said 'Why didn't you go to the curate?' 'Well, your Reverence,' said the man, 'you see 'tis the way this poor woman has a trifle of money and I thought I'd see yourself first.' 'Sit down there now,' said the priest, 'till I get out the decanter, and you'll have a glass, and then, with the blessing of God, we'll be going about our duty.' I told him Judge —— once said to Edward Morphy, the Crown Prosecutor, who is a strong Protestant: 'I suppose Morphy is the Protestant for Murphy?' His Grace was much tickled and said reverently, 'God rest him! God rest him! He was a very good Christian, but the devil of a bad Judge.'"

"TRALEE, 15th Nov., 1901.

"I am trying to tighten my grip here as I have taken the scalps of three Kerry solicitors. I am in a case to-day about cut-away bog and a measure they call a 'slane,' which means the amount of turf that can be cut with a spade, having a blade at right angles, by five men between sunrise and sunset in the month of August. I also have a case about people who had a 'colloge' for mountain sheep and contrary to their terms fed young deer on the hills with the sheep. 'Over stint' they call it. They are very entertaining.

"I have found a Cork man here who has a lovely pub. As he wants to stand me food and drink all the time I am here I have purchased something from him which I send on to you."

"20 IV., 1902.

". . . I am at Tralee Assizes—breaking into a ring of clever little Kerry men who are running all the junior litigation of the Kingdom. They are horribly jealous of their prerogatives. The solicitors here and in Cork used to go out and pawn all they had to brief —— on account of his father being ——, but I have changed all that by my profound impudence. He was very rude to a witness in a case, and when we came on the moment he jumped up I said in the most pompous manner, 'Your father, sir, has to conduct himself in the Commons. I hope you will try to do the same in His Majesty's Court.' The aborigine solicitors were dumbfounded, and all the mountainy attorneys went out and had a drink and said: 'There is some chance for Ireland yet.'

"If I can I will send some trout from here. I met three small boys from Cork here. They go fishing all day long. They got 42 trout yesterday and sent them all away. They are three brothers, eldest fifteen—Peter, Pat, and Michael S. They saved £5 and came here for three days, arranging with the Hotel to find them in everything for £3. I had no sooner met them than Mick, the youngest, got into most agreeable conversation with me, while the other two went away on important business. He told me a long story about the top piece of his fishing-rod, and gave me some instruction in tying flies, and before I knew where I was he had got three shillings from me. This morning Pat appeared by my bedside and asked me for the loan of a clothes-brush. He then proceeded without a word to brush my clothes. Coming out of the Church after Mass the other two remained absorbed in prayer while Pat followed me out and asked if I could advance him 5*s.* till he got his remittance from home. I was thinking of running away early in the morning to Tralee, but I find that Peter has asked the hotel porter when I am going and where; and I know he means to come and see me off—and then? They are out on the Lake now, and if they get anything I mean to have my whack out of it whether they like it or not. They are doing themselves very proud. Last night at the *table d'hôte* here they had a bottle of claret and a couple of lemonades in a glass jug. They are strongly in favour of Higher Education for the Irish Catholics."

"29th September, 1902.

"Forgive my not writing sooner. A ruffian of a patriot stuck me for some coin and I was soured. I hope you saw France at its best. I love it and the sky over it. I have lots of stories, but I feel that they lose in the writing out. I wish you could come over, and we would do Cork together. All Ireland is against Cork for receiving the Chief Secretary one night and denouncing Coercion the next, but Cork will survive. I am 'after having' a tremendous lunch with ——. He is going over to present the Kaiser with a loving cup at Potsdam. I tried all I knew to get him to take me with him as Chaplain or anything and swore I knew German like a native. . . .

"I am going down to Longford to-night to defend Farrell, M.P., and I am going to Limerick on Thursday to defend the only Protestant in Munster who has been prosecuted, the aim being to put the case so that an appeal will be to the County Court Judge. The winter looks like work and I am getting fit again. . . . I asked a policeman about an hour ago at Kingsbridge where the nearest cab could be found as it was spilling rain. His reply was: 'How the divil would I know? I never takes wan.'"

. . . . . .

"I am down here defending patriots, among Palatines, meeting such names among the witnesses as Joana Switzer, Deborah Boulenizer. My client is a Protestant. He has got six months hard. He is a nice little fellow. Fancy his wife's name is Van Winter—and she claims descent from a Williamite officer. . . ."

The last letter in the little bundle was written three weeks before he died, to me, this time.

"Howth, 4th IX., '04.

"I am down here trying to get to sleep. Otherwise I am mending. I saw the picture of your little girl and think it very delightful. She must be a real little storeen.

"H. might write to me about something or other. I am getting a loan of Hawkins' Memoirs to go on with when I am a bit better. I wonder if he could get me a loan of the translation of 'Rinucinni' he spoke to me about.

"When I was in Hospital a little nurse woke me one night out of a grand slumber to give me my sleeping draught.

"I never could tell you all the kind things people here have done for me. As much work as can be done that way the men at the Four Courts do for me and hand over the fees to me with a chuckle. A man called here to-day and paid me £10 I lent him a long time ago and thought was gone for ever."

That was the last we had from him.

One does not often make enduring friendships after one has come to forty years. Very often one made what seemed like a friendship but turned out to be only a "Hail and Farewell." There had been years—young years—when at the end of the year I sat down to count my gains in the way of new friendships. Perhaps one exacted less in the young years. Certain it is that various acquaintanceships, pursued with zest for a time, proved not to have the requisite elements for real friendship. An old friend once said to me: "New friends are all very well, but you cannot say to them 'Do you remember?' The time comes when those to whom you could say it are nearly all dead."

One or two pleasant things of that time I will chronicle before passing away from it. There was a little luncheon party with poor Angus Hamilton, the war correspondent, at—I think it must have been Gray's Inn. He had met us at a Whitefriars dinner, occupying the place next to ours by accident, and he had immediately asked us to lunch. It was a delightful little entertainment. The lady who was to become his wife, with a barrister whose name I have forgotten, were the other guests. The meal was an excellent one. I suppose it had been sent in from somewhere. But what amused us was the extravagance of the little entertainment. There were new potatoes, asparagus, and strawberries in February; and the table was decorated with roses. It had been a co-operative lunch on the part of the two young people.

The barrister told a delightful story of a London cabby whose horse had got "a flick," and another cabby whose horse would have got a flick if he had known what the transferred fare would offer for the journey between Fleet Street and Campden Hill. Angus Hamilton told us of his visit to King Edward. He had been summoned to Buckingham Palace to tell the King of his adventures in Manchuria. He described him as "a bluff English country gentleman, dressed in a grey suit, speaking with a marked German accent." One might have been in a Paris rather than a London room, so gay was the little entertainment.

That looked like a promising friendship. The pair were to dine with us one evening in the following week. We warned them that they would not have asparagus, new potatoes, strawberries, and green peas—yes, there were green peas, and not tinned ones either. We liked the two so much. An hour after we got home there was a telegram from Angus Hamilton written with a reckless profusion of words apologising for some small imagined coldness to me of which the lady had apprised him. They did not come to dinner. We never saw either of them again.

One morning a letter came from Edmund Sullivan, the artist. He asked me if I would accept a couple of drawings, illustrations of my story "Julia" which had run in the *Gentlewoman*. Would I? They are very treasured possessions of mine, with many early pictures by A. E., some original Dudley Hardys, including a delightful portrait sketch of my five-year-old boy—"a delicious bit of childhood," Mrs. Meynell called it—a chalk drawing by W. B. Yeats, one of the few relics of his art-student days, and other such things of a special interest. Afterwards we went to spend a long Sunday with the Sullivans at Cookham. Edmund Sullivan was as keen about that visit as a child. One felt that he could not have endured the disappointment if we had not come. They spent a long day with us some time during the summer. We kept up an animated correspondence for a time. Then somehow it dropped off. I never could tell how or why. Our ways had parted.

That long day in the garden at Ealing there came a visitor, a Miss Hickman, who had been friend and house-mate to Cecil Rhodes' sister. Now and again she glanced at Edmund Sullivan curiously. At last she recognised him. She had attended a drawing-class with him at Eastbourne in their young days. There was a hail of questions—what became of So-and-So ? and So-and-So ? Then came the final question : "And you ?" she asked. "Did you go on with it or did you give it up long ago ?"

One missed one's opportunities in those years. Once or twice I was asked to the International *Conversazione* by Edmund Sullivan and by others, and did not go. To go back a long way, I was asked to be one of the hostesses of the Women's Dinner given at the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, at which well-known women were to entertain each a distinguished man. Mr. Balfour was Mrs. Humphry Ward's guest, I remember. If I could have gone I should have asked Mr. John Redmond to be mine—but it was impossible.

An old door was opened to me when we dined one evening with Lady Young, who had been so good to me in early days. I had Mr. Herbert Paul beside me at dinner. I found him rather overpowering. In fact he made me feel shy ; and my shyness was not lessened by my table-napkin persisting in sliding from my black satin lap to the floor, and Mr. Duncan Schwann on the other side of me going down on his knees every time to pick it up. I positively prayed at last that he would not observe its fall ; but he always did.

It was pleasant to meet these old friends again. Sir George Young, as gentle and scholarly as I remembered him, Lady Young stately and handsome as of old—

but the three Eton boys so changed. George had covered himself with glory by his coolness and courage when the bomb was thrown into the wedding carriage of the King and Queen of Spain. He was an attaché at Madrid, and was the first to reach the young Queen and lift her from the carriage. He was, of course, not present; but there was Geoffrey Young, who was a house-master at Eton and is a poet of achievement; and there was Hilton, now with the Grand Fleet and also a poet, then just down from Oxford and full of a political career. The sons of their father and mother could hardly fail to be scholarly and poetic as well as other things.

That very pleasant door swung to again, by my own fault. Those were years given to the domesticities.

Many another open door. There was an evening at Lady Lindsay's—with Lady Hallé, Mr. George W. E. Russell, W. S. Lilly, Mrs. Clifford—others—and a deal of brilliant talk.

I only emerged from the domesticities for these things and the domesticities snatched me back again.

CHAPTER XXIII

NEW FRIENDS AND OLD

We had a delightful friendship in 1906 with a Californian Irishman, Martin Egan, who was in London representing the Associated Press of America, and his wife, who was a syndicate all to herself. She, despite youth and beauty, had gone fearlessly for her syndicate wherever great events were happening, apparently with no remotest thought of danger. They had met indeed during the war between Japan and China, when they were both acting as correspondents for their syndicates.

A good many writing Londoners will remember Martin Egan as a particularly lovable person. Mrs. Egan was, and is, a vivacious blonde brunette; it is the only way I can describe milky skin, with an underlying suggestion of the peculiar colour for which we have no more agreeable name than liver-colour. She always dressed beautifully. She was gay and sparkling; and no more than a girl. Yet, the places!—and the tight places!—she had got into! *Par exemple*—here is a letter written from London in the month of December, 1915:—

> "I have been away from home six months. I've seen more war than most soldiers. I've been in jail and had a submarine encounter wherein I nearly lost my life. But I am coming back."

The strange fearlessness of the American woman—foolhardiness one would call it, if there was any record of mischief having come to any one of them—was hers.

We had met the Egans at the house of Denis O'Sullivan, the Irish-American singer, and we became friends almost at once. They had taken Whistler's house, with the copper door, in Cheyne Walk and had furnished it as though they had pitched their tent for the remainder of their days. Through that hospitable door poured a never-ceasing stream of American and other visitors—men of affairs and their women-kind. Others as well, of course. The charming couple found many doors open to them. There used to be delightful gatherings in Whistler's studio which Mrs. Egan used as her drawing-room—if that is not too restricted a word for the beautiful room, furnished with a few very good Eastern things brought from China and Japan, with Persian rugs on the polished floor, where anyone who wanted to could smoke and everyone was perfectly at home. Steps from the studio ascended the sort of gallery or platform where Whistler died.

We saw a great deal of the Egans that winter, spring, and summer of 1905–6, and we went to many functions together.

I remember Eleanor Egan telling us of her life in Japan before she had met Martin Egan. She was at Tokyo, I think. She lived in the most delicious little house in a cherry orchard which had a tank or pond in the orchard full of lotus flowers and water-lilies. She lived there alone with an old man-cook whom we shall call Ah San. Those of her friends and colour in Tokyo were very averse to her living in this earthly paradise as she depicted it. It was unhealthy, they said; the pond and the orchard were infested with snakes and all kinds of horrible things under the flowers. She would not listen. She wanted to write a book about the war and it would take her six months. She would not go home when the others were going. She would stay and finish her book in the little house of the cherry orchard.

She had a dog, a white fox-terrier whom she called

Bill. She, and Bill, soon became aware that the cherry orchard and the pond deserved all that had been said of its concealed inhabitants. Bill was constantly killing snakes, bloated spiders and horrible reptiles of various kinds, and, though he was always game, he showed a queer excited rage and hatred of some of the beasts which was rather nervy.

There is a certain large scorpion in those parts—the zoologist might refuse to identify it, but I am taking Mrs. Egan's word—who will sit on a beam or cornice and look at you from a hideous little face, his horrible body swollen with poison. He was the one beast of which Eleanor Egan was afraid. Bill kept the little Japanese toy-house free of the beasts that were within his reach.

One night she was writing away busily when something plopped on to her bare shoulder. She had been out to dinner and had sat down to write just as she was in evening dress. She felt the tentacles enter her flesh. The creature was sitting on her shoulder emptying all his poison bag into her body. She said, telling the story, that she went quite mad. She could do nothing but scream. Old Ah San scurried into the room and plucked the scorpion away, with but half his poison discharged. Ah San could handle any beast with impunity. She kept screaming "Kill it! Kill it!" while he, the beast on the palm of his hand, kept trying to soothe her. As a Buddhist he was forbidden to take life. However, seeing that she would not be pacified otherwise, he tore the creature in two and flung it from him into a corner, where Bill, springing upon it in a frenzy, worried it to bits.

She used to tell how Ah San, soothing her like a child, applied lotions to her shoulder. The arm and shoulder had begun to swell enormously. It meant three months in hospital, and she narrowly escaped losing the arm, which would have been a pity, for her arms and shoulders were beautiful.

"If I live I shall go back there again," she said, telling the story, "if it is only to see that dear old soul Ah San—and Bill. I had to give him Bill. I could not take the dog all that way back with me. But the house in the cherry orchard . . . !" She ended up with an expressive shudder.

We used to have such odd delightful meals at the Egans', part Eastern, part American; and such lavish hospitality! Twelve or fourteen would sit down to a lunch of many courses on Sunday; and I think the bedroom accommodation, which was poky—all having been sacrificed to the beautiful studio—was strained to its utmost always while the Egans were in the house.

That summer we found an old delightful cottage at Bletchingley in Surrey for our holidays. Part of it was hundreds of years old, with tiny windows in the deep walls and a steeply-pointed roof. A little old woman with a grey shawl about her shoulders, herself and her shawl something of the colour and texture of the mist, used to creep about the old rooms of the cottage at night. Someone who was not at all afraid saw her lean and peer by the children's beds and then waver away into the moonlight or the mist, so that she might not have been there at all.

There had been a new bit added to the cottage which gave it a fairly spacious bedroom, a sitting-room, and a tiny bathroom, with a glorious hot-water supply. The cottage was a picture as it looked down its garden between the box borders at the little gate set in a thick privet hedge to which one ascended by steps; while the steep road ran below and down the hill, between high banks full of writhen tree roots that had a queer suggestion of the anguish of the Laocoon if you saw them by twilight.

Our cottage looked down the loveliest valley, between the hills. All that was ugly was out of sight. Bletchingley had ugly bits, and a huge workhouse ; but you need never see them. There was a delightful inn in the village, full of old furniture, old china, old pewter and brass and copper. There, of week-ends, the Egans came. When they dined with us we had dinner in the cottage garden, as we had all our meals that hot summer out of doors, at a big kitchen table. When the evenings began to close in we had a number of Japanese lanterns, which Eleanor Egan brought down from town, suspended from the big yew tree which shaded the front of the cottage and made a curtain for the bathroom window. We used to look very fairy-like seen from a distant height. But those who passed by the gate down Sandy Lane were unaware of us.

Dear Bletchingley ! The names of those English places where we made holiday are like golden beads on a string—Westerham, Ockley, Bletchingley, Malvern—but Malvern was yet to come. Bletchingley was full of beauties. There were the lovely high golf-links. There was the Castle Hill, from which you saw all the counties glittering at your feet away to the sea. There were the steep lanes by Nutfield, the climb to White Hill. Dear vanished summers, how one's heart goes back to the weeks spent in those exquisite places ! I had a very untravelled heart in those days, for nothing contented me but England and Ireland. Of Scotland I knew and know nothing.

We had at Bletchingley a local cook who made a meat pie—a gross dish usually—to an unheard-of perfection. She was a real artist. To make a meat pie as she made it, she told us, required that one should as a preliminary work one's self into a violent rage. She cooked only in a frenzy. Her name was Mrs. Smith, but she could not have been Anglo-Saxon. That touch of genius forbade the thought. She would not kill a chicken, although her husband was a butcher. "My!" she said, "I *should* 'ave a 'ard 'eart!" She said of him: "Smith was a travelled man. He never *would* call France abroad." So perhaps he was as unusual as she.

One Sunday the Egans arrived unexpectedly. They had returned to town as they usually did between the week-ends, and had not reappeared on the Saturday. They had dismaying news. Martin Egan had been offered the salary of a Prime Minister to go back to New York and take control of a new magazine, or a magazine which had failed "to make good." He was going almost at once.

Over was our dream of buying land in the English country, where land was to be had cheap, and settling down side by side. Martin Egan had a simple old-fashioned nature—something of "the old honest countryman," though he was still young—and the thought of having his own land fascinated him as it did us. In my case and in his perhaps it was the land-hunger of the Irish Celt. It would hardly have contented him after all; or us—certainly not Eleanor Egan, who will not leave a spot of earth unvisited, if she can help it, within her span of life. A hundred acres between us in Essex or the hinterlands of Hertfordshire or far down in Sussex, or Hampshire—somewhere remote enough for land to be cheap. Our own imaginative bungalows upon it. That was the dream. It vanished like a dream.

We went up to Cheyne Walk for the last night to see Martin Egan off in the morning. It was breathlessly hot early-September weather—the thermometer breaking records every day for several days around that visit. There was a big dinner party, very gay, but with a note of farewell about it.

Of the guests I remember specially two quite young men, one of whom was staying in the house. They were typical young Americans. One was going out as American Consul-General to Mukden, the other as his assistant. They were about twenty-eight and twenty-five respectively, but they did not look as though they had ever been young. They marked in my mind the difference between the American man and the American woman, for the American woman may be fresh and fair—she very often is—but the American man is dried up in his youth as though he had been mummified. These young men were very gay in an American way. After the dinner-guests had departed and the real intimate time had come, they sang coon-songs to the banjo, sitting on the floor, in a wild abandonment of gaiety that all the time had something old and watchful and unamused behind it.

The Consul-General told us that he had had that day an interview with a great man in Whitehall or Downing Street. He had made his way into the Presence which remained unconscious of him for some minutes. The Presence sat with its back to the visitor writing at a table. After a time it turned about sharply. "Who are you, pray ?" "I'm the American Consul-General for Mukden," in a long nasal drawl. The Presence whisked his chair around to stare. "Good Gawd !" he said, according to the Consul-General, who told the anecdote unashamed.

Presently we were back again in Ealing at the old routine of joyful work and occasional play. I can wish none a better gift than the joy in daily work which has been my happy portion. I have never flagged. An enforced abstention from work for a few weeks at a time has meant nerves and shortness of temper. I might put down among my relaxations in *Who's Who*—"Work and walking." When I am no longer able for these things—let me be going!

I had long known the benefit of working in the open, which I have done every summer for many years. In winter, in those Ealing days, I was still as much in the open air as was possible with three windows open top and bottom. When the east wind poured into the rose-coloured room I used to draw a screen about me, wrap myself in a shawl, and write, opposite a roaring fire. We have attained a real love for the sharp austerity of air even at the coldest. It said a deal for our qualities that we still kept our friends. But to be sure it was their turn when we went to visit them.

I take a couple of pages from my diary at random as indicative of how my days have been spent, with little variation, for many years.

Here is Thursday, October 18, 1906:—

"Letter W——. Proofs *Quiver*. Sent *Pall Mall* 'Blackberrying'—*Throne* 'Cottage Gardens.' 'The Child's Question' to *Spectator*. 'A Night Thought' to *Westminster*. Wrote L—— Mrs. Angus Hamilton Julia Crottie. Sent ——'s 'Killaries' and 'Man from Oregon' to *Weekly Freeman* and 'A Summer's Day' to *Irish People*. Sent cheque to Cleaning and Dyeing Company. Wrote P. H. Did November poem for *Tribune* and sent it Philip Gibbs. Corrected last proofs of 'Mary Gray.' Wrote D——."

I take up another, Thursday, April 27, 1907:—

"Letters L——. *Great Thoughts*. S. M. 'Cricket Begins' back from *Tribune*. Sent it *Westminster Gazette*. Sent 'Her Ladyship' to *Great Thoughts*. 'A Middle Class Romance' to *Vanity Fair*. 'An Unwise Girl' to W—— for *Lady's World*. 'B's Natural History' to *Tribune*, two articles to N. N. Syndicate. Wrote L——, M. C., M. K., J. H. Roundelay back from *Westminster*. Sent it *Chronicle*. Did half-chapter. Proof 'The Locked Wing' *Chambers*."

Those were days when after a long morning walk round by Perivale I used to have my lunch brought to me on a tray and work away pretty well all the day. Very often we had people to dinner, and of course the children were not completely ignored. But they were out-of-doors for as much of the day as was possible.

I marvel now at my energy in sending my wares about when they were apparently not commissioned. Not only that, but I did a good deal in the same way for other people, with more or less success. I was pulled up once by a lady, whose work I had been rather lucky with, sending me three long MSS. by a friend. There would have been at least 30,000 words in them, and one was a story of the time of Semiramis. " She was very timid about my sending them," she wrote, " but I told her you *loved* to do it, and that it was really quite easy for you to ' place ' things."

Our weeks now at Ealing were numbered. Towards the end of 1906 the headaches from which I had always suffered became increasingly violent and frequent. The entries in my diary record " headache " and sometimes " double headache," which meant one headache following another—sometimes two or three days in succession. During the last fortnight of the year the headaches, seven in fourteen days—made me begin to tremble for the future of my work. Mrs. Meynell was subject to the same headaches. Francis Thompson, who had been a medical student, had a learned name for them—something like hemicranial headaches—because they affected one side of the head and one eye. They were in fact the true *migraine*, beginning with " fortification figures "—arcs, half-arcs, zig-zags of white, flashing before the eyes or eye. Francis Thompson, coming out of an abstraction, was very much annoyed by a suggestion which had reached him that anyone but Mrs. Meynell could have hemicranial headaches—if that was the word. When he found that I was the privileged person, he said handsomely: "Oh, well—perhaps Mrs. Hinkson *may* have them."

The headaches had come in low places, or places surrounded by water. At times the glare of the snow, the flash of wet roads in the sun, a bright reflection in a mirror, would bring them. They had always come for an affront, a time of suspense, for any emotion which I had to keep in check. So it was decided that we must live on higher ground, and our own inclinations led us somewhere amid the fields.

On February 9, 1907—a day of two headaches—I wrote to Rudyard Kipling to tell him of my small boy's comments on "The Jungle Book" which he had just discovered, with as much joy as twenty years earlier his mother had discovered "Danny Deever" in a Sunday number of the *Providence Journal*, a huge miscellany whose English-born editor had a flair for the good things of literature.

I reported to the magician what Bunny had said. The only thing I remember now was his surprise that so great a story-teller as Mr. Kipling should not know how to spell "Tommy." "He spells it T. double o. m.a.i. Tommy of the Elephants. I should think he'd have known that Tommy was spent T.o.m.y."

This attempt to amuse the giver of so much joy had an unhoped-for happy result, for Mr. Kipling wrote a delightful letter, which is among the treasures of the family and is understood to be the property of the boy whose criticism had called it forth.

In March of that year John O'Leary died, and the world was the poorer for the whitest, simplest, most high-minded of patriots and men. He died very happily, cared for by his devoted niece, and with all the consolations of the Catholic Church. His niece wrote to me just before his death.

> "Father Tom Finlay gave Uncle John Holy Communion on Friday and sees him very often."

I mention this fact because John O'Leary had had a quarrel with the priests from the old Fenian days. Ellen O'Leary, despite her full participation in her brother's Fenianism—the true Fenianism, which though not "transacting" was ideally high-minded—had always remained a most devout Catholic.

The letter goes on :—

> "When the Piatts called to-day we were talking about you, and my old love chimed in 'Katharine Tynan has a very affectionate heart.' 'Oh yes,' I said, 'I am jealous of her. You always send her your *best* love and you should keep that for me.' He turned his beautiful mild smile upon me,—you remember—and he said 'You are the most jealous woman I ever met.'"

It is always sweet to me to remember that I was in the affections of the dear, noble old man. Years before he had defended me against Mr. Yeats (Willie's father), who had been very angry about a sketch of mine in the *Westminster Gazette*, which he called anti-Irish. There is no Irishism so unreasonable as that of the Anglo-Irishman. It is, or was, rather anti-English than pro-Irish ; this odd phenomenon used to be very observable in even the strongest Unionists—that is, in pre-War days. It was a kind of jealousy of England. In Unionist circles in those days if you protested mildly against the many shibboleths concerning England you were told that you had become Anglicised by long residence in England ; and if you hinted at an Irish fault a whole avalanche of reproaches were hurled upon you. Perhaps a trifle more unreasonable, if it were possible, was the convert from Unionism, for whom you could never be sufficiently patriotic. Mr. Yeats was a Nationalist—an independent one. John O'Leary broke into his denunciations of my sketch: "I don't care what she writes, or what she does, her heart's in the right place."

I set these things down with pride. They are among the secret sweetnesses and greennesses of my life, now no longer secret—as when Alice Meynell said to me once: "I think you are the only friend I have who has never hurt me."

Self-glorification indeed. Let it be put down as a weakness and forgiven me!

CHAPTER XXIV

BACK TO THE LAND

Once in the early years of our married life when my husband was hunting for a country cottage he happened on a Common out of fairy-land, and straightway forgot its name. He used to rave of the beauties of that Common, high up, golden with gorse, its beautiful thickets, its winding paths, its pretty cottages and old houses, and all real country, within thirty miles of London. The cottage he went to see which was called Rose Cottage was unsuitable for some reason or other. The day he saw this wonderful Common was one of many days of cottage hunting when he went alone, I being pre-occupied with a delicate baby. It must have been the preoccupation which prevented his and my remembering the name.

We hunted maps and railway guides for it. Now and again we thought we had found its name, but could not be sure. In time it became a myth. I am not sure that I did not believe it a dream of his in a time of much distraction. We had asked all our motoring and cycling friends about it without coming on a clue. Was it likely that a beautiful Common, within thirty miles of London, could be lost in that way?

The time came for us to be done with London and its suburbs. Looking back now it seems to me that, despite all my doing, I slept away those seven years at Ealing. I had always had a dream at the back of my mind of living in the country once again. Those delicious country holidays had had their poignancy, because they were to come to an end. My special dream was of driving home through the country night. It must be a June night, with a large moon, a heavy dew, the air full of sweetness and the soft sounds of cattle feeding; and all the tiny rustling movements going on in the hedgerows as one passed. Another interned countrywoman once said to me as we drove in the country: "I love the smell of a sweating horse. It reminds me of Wicklow."

That was the dream I had had at Notting Hill, amid the decaying squares and gardens and crescents—the heavy scent of hawthorn, as we call in Ireland the English May; and the hedges white, and we going through miles of it on a May night.

So that the dream might come true we arranged to give up our Ealing house in June. We did a deal of house-hunting in the spring of 1907. We went to Dunmow on an east-wind day and found the whole place shuttered and a cat asleep in the middle of the Market Place. It was an early closing day; but we took it to be the normal aspect of Dunmow and were very glad to get back to life. I must not forget that there was a small pink orchard attached to the unlovely house we went to see there, glowing like a very, very pink rose in the steely east wind haze. The apple blossom or something else smelt divinely.

We did not try Essex again. I had always a love for Surrey. We tried Farnham and Godalming and Reigate and Epsom. Very often we *nearly* took houses in these places. It was spring, and the new green always makes me heady, or did when I lived in England where the green quite dies every year and comes back as an amazing, incredible miracle. A newly-green garden had that effect on me that it made me for the moment quite certain we were going to take the house. Or was

I quite certain? Was it not like picking mushrooms in a field when you *think* you see a mushroom many times but have no doubt about it when you do see one, or like appendicitis, which you may *think* you have but when you have it you *know?*

There was a house at Reigate which we *thought* we would take to that extent that we really went into the matter carefully with the house-agent. At the back of our minds we knew we should not take it when we went off saying that he should hear from us the next morning for certain; and he knew it: and our case could not have been an uncommon one, for he wore an air of weary disillusionment. The little velvety green garden of the Reigate house, with its Italian terraces and small pines and poplars like pale green flames, had a churchyard air to my mind—I could not tell why. Presently I discovered that it was a cemetery of dogs, cats, and canaries. Their little gravestones were popping up everywhere out of the grass.

Then there was the house at High Wycombe where we were so very unwelcome with our order to view, to the terrible dumb old lady with a beard, and eyes that regarded us with hatred. There was a tremendous house-cleaning going on; and a bedroom that smelt of carbolic, and a print on the bed of something lately taken away—that shape which hangs between us and the sun.

Then again there was the house at Rugby—an ordinary little terrace-house, where Something went before one up the stairs and in and out of the blinded rooms.

Again there was the ridiculously cheap place, with six delicious acres of garden, orchard and paddock, all pranked out in green and white, belonging to a mean little house set in the midst of all the beauty. Its mean little green hall-door under a skimped porch had a Latin inscription of a most depressing nature painted on the lintel, and the dark rooms were heavily shaded by great clumps of laurestinus and Portugal laurels. That too was uncanny.

At last—a house-agent's circular came to us. And straight out of it leaped the name of the long-lost Common—Chipperfield!

We went down there with a joyous anticipation. We found a newly-built house, daintily toy-like, much too small for us, but so appealing that we could not resist it. When I went home and told the cook that the kitchen dresser was enclosed by diamond-paned doors she asked me if the kitchen range was a good make and if the coal cellar was out of doors. I could not inform her on either of those points.

To be sure, the house was set down in a field and there was only a rough outline of garden; but there were fields all round, and lovely woods, and nightingales. And there was the Common. So we took the dear little house, and while we waited to make a garden about it we called it Greenhurst after a darling place in Surrey though its greenery was yet to come.

We had taken the house on a very fine east-windy May day, when the banks were covered with speedwell and stitchwort; and, having taken it, we panted for the hour when we should move in. My heaven was within my reach at last.

When kind people pitied us for the ordeal of moving we felt rather annoyed. In this case so beautiful was the whole transaction that there was a glamour over even the moving. The children were palpitating to see the new house. We could scarcely contain ourselves till the great day came, which was the 7th of June.

As a matter of fact it was an aggravated form of moving. In order that the transfer should be accomplished in one day it began abnormally early. Sometime about 5 a.m. wild-headed barbarians were asking at your bedside if they could take the bed. They chivied you from room to room while you dressed. Nothing was sacred to them.

The Young Lady Next Door, who had long since proved herself a Good Samaritan, carried off the children and Paddy, the Irish terrier, to breakfast. We had a scratch meal somehow ; and late in the forenoon we set off for Paradise.

Does anyone now remember the four dismal summers of 1907—1908—1909—1910 ? Of course it belongs to a long, long time ago, before Anno Belli 1914. It was a grey morning when we left the suburb behind, with just that touch of sadness one must always feel when a long chapter of one's life comes to an end. The dust whirled in our faces as we went across the Green to the station, not to return. There were three children, a wild Irish tyke, a cat in a basket, three adults, and a luncheon basket, the strap of which came off at intervals. We had left the servants to follow, so we had to do our own chores. Between Gower Street Station and Euston the strap came off six times, and as many times the Irish terrier's lead got around lamp-posts or the legs of people. The one who was carrying the luncheon basket had also insisted on leading the dog, not out of helpfulness, but out of exasperation. Euston Road was arid. The dust storm was hardly mitigated by the drops of cold rain that began to fall. However, the long-dreamt-of joy was to come. This was only the London side of the journey.

I shall not dwell on the discomforts of that day. Someone had opened a door to the children and their governess, which was an alleviation. During the first exploration of the house the pickle of the family had succeeded in locking himself and the others into a room, and the lock had to be forced to get them out. They were not so enthusiastic as we expected. Indeed, the younger ones remarked that they did not like a garden where you could see everything : a garden without mystery was no good. The governess was out of temper, because it was so dull to be packed off with the children to a cottage on the Common when there was anything so delightful as moving-in in process.

All day long the wind cried dismally round the empty house and the windows rattled. It was bitterly cold. When the servants arrived some time in the afternoon they lit a fire. But there was nothing to sit on except the floor or the wooden window-seats. We had pictured ourselves sitting out of doors in the summer fields during the moving-in. I had not even provided myself with a book to read. There had seemed no room for reading in the joyful realisation of a dream as I had pictured it.

We had hurried back from our lunch at the cottage to receive the vans. It was 9.30 when the advance guard came in view. The main body was held up at the foot of Whippendell Hill. Whippendell Hill is the two steep sides of a cup, with a row of delicious cottages at the bottom of the cup.

Fatigue ached in me as it had never ached before. The beds were put up by candle light and a sleeping-place was ready by midnight. The men had refused food. They were going to make one more effort to get the vans up Whippendell.

Off they went with their weary horses. We waited : an hour passed. There was not a sound of them in that cold, clear night of hard frost, the 7th of June ! What a mockery ! as an old lady wrote to me once, recounting how outside the Mercy Convent in Cork a cat had been pelted with stones by some schoolboys. " The *Mercy* Convent ! " she wrote. " *What* a mockery ! ! ! ! "

At 1 o'clock we concluded, or thought we concluded, or pretended we thought we concluded, that they had given up the attempt and had gone to the village for the night. So we all retired to bed, and scarcely had we sunk into warm slumber before the poor wretches came. What nice, amiable, harmless barbarians they were! Sadly and hungrily they retired to rest in the vans; and were all but frozen to death that night of flaming June.

An unpropitious beginning—yet it was not without its sweetness. We lived at Chipperfield for three years. At first we were packed so tightly that we could scarcely move, but within a few months a benevolent landlord's agent had built us on a couple of big rooms which much relieved the congestion. They were long delightful rooms stretching out into the garden—a large bedroom above, a library below. The approach to the library was very quaint. You stepped out of the original garden door into a flagged passage, with the original red-brick walls. People used to say it was like the porch of a church. From that you entered the big library, which, new as it was, had somehow the air of a college room.

We went into those two rooms as soon as ever the builder was out of them, and took no harm, though the nails rusted in the walls and the pictures became spotty. As we always lived with wide-open windows whatever the weather, we could take no harm from a little additional damp, I suppose.

In that long, low room of one window, draped with green curtains, looking towards Scatterdell Woods, the tiny square window by the bed-head looking down Whippendell, I have had more heavenly intimations of the Spring than anywhere else before or since. They used to come on a cold afternoon of February or March with a red sun and a coppery haze. The room would be filled with a cold warmly-coloured brightness. And suddenly I would feel the Spring beside me, like an actual living presence in the room.

Chipperfield was a dear place. I had forgotten to mention one good happening of the uncomfortable day of fulfilment. Among the letters awaiting us on arrival was an acceptance from *The Times* of my novel "The House of the Crickets," as a serial for the Weekly Edition. It was a good omen. The three years at Chipperfield were busy and prosperous ones. Nothing could have been more kind and friendly than the neighbours. To be sure they had the high example of the Lady of the Manor. She shall have a chapter to herself, not the fag-end of a chapter. She exemplified all the courtesies, all the generosities, all the hospitalities. She belonged to the great days. It was well worth while to have gone to Chipperfield only to have known her.

Though we were nearer three miles than two from King's Langley station, by a steep precipitous climb up, all that plateau was well populated. The villages remained very primitive. There were some people in Chipperfield village who were of the stuff of Thomas Hardy's rustics. Further away there were villages untouched since the Heptarchy, one would say. There were yet people in those villages who had never been in a train. Chipperfield village still submitted to the penalty imposed by Crookback Richard on the Chipperfield women who had mocked him as he rode under the great tree on the Common which still bore his name—no woman inherited directly from her male belongings.

It was a place of lovely names—Sarratt and Chenies and Latimer, King's Langley and Abbot's Langley. Whose was the spirit of poetry that devised the English names of places? I said once to the Lady of the Manor that Goldington was so beautiful a name, and she said: "It is, but I had not thought of it. You bring a fresh eye and ear."

We had almost time to feel lonely before the callers began. To be sure it was the holiday season and many people were away. When they came we were no longer lonely. Just about us there were a good many people who, the male portion of them, went up to London every day. London does create something of a cosmopolitan atmosphere, the easy attitude towards life and his fellows of a man of the world. There was nothing of the narrowness and dullness which I have found in other country-places in England. The parson was a thoroughly good fellow and he had a delightful wife, as unlike the commonly-accepted type of Mrs. Parson as possible, as near the ideal parson's wife as possible. She was tall, fair and slender, with a pretty fluttering air of girlhood. She was as good as gold and as sweet as a rose. She was heroic as such women often are, leaving nothing undone for husband, home, children, friends, the poor, the parish. We used to laugh at her when she went "parishing." She confessed that she always thought it an impertinence, but hoped they would treat her visits as friendly calls. She was a most lovable thing. She suffered a great deal from rheumatism. I remember a melancholy Christmas when all her children were ill with diphtheria, and the servants as well, when the Vicarage was in strict quarantine—no one to do anything but the Vicar and his wife, and she twisted up with rheumatism. Despite the strict quarantine, a tale leaked out of the dear pretty creature going upstairs on her hands and knees to the children when she could not bear the pain of standing upright.

The happy state of things between us and the Vicarage was shown in the arrangement by which the Vicar's little daughter came daily to share the lessons of our Papistical children from their Papistical governess. To be a Catholic was no disability here, although we had been warned that we might expect such a thing in English country. Indeed, there were two or three Catholic families as well as ourselves.

I used to say that I had never been in a place where there were so many pleasant women in their varying kinds. There was hardly one who was not bright and agreeable. Chipperfield was very much the gayest bit of my English life.

Having been an inveterate card-player in my Irish days, I had almost forgotten the feel of a card during my industrious, exemplary English days. I found everyone playing bridge at Chipperfield. I had played nap and poker and the Irish games, spoil-five and twenty-five. There is or was, by the way, a long-drawn-out twenty-five known as forty-five in Ireland—and the uncertainties of life and the game are well displayed in the Irish equivalent to "Many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip"—"The priest was forty, but he lost his boots." Bridge was almost quite new to me, but after a time I got the hang of it. Auction bridge was still new and had not reached Chipperfield.

Those were truly delightful social occasions when we met at each other's houses for a bridge afternoon. They were purely feminine functions. "A bright fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game." We wore our smartest clothes; we ate Fuller's sweets and chocolates while we played; and we had such teas as only the efficient English housekeeper knows how to provide. They make me hungry to think upon them.

Intelligence and humour were common in that society. The ill-nature which often exists in such communities was entirely absent. I believe bridge cast it out. You cannot be evil-speaking or evil-thinking while you are playing bridge.

Meanwhile, almost cheek by jowl with lively Chipperfield, there were sets and communities of people of the most narrow and intolerant views. Extreme Low Church Protestantism dominated a good deal of the society beyond our bright borders. Old-fashioned! If you were asked to a garden-party, ten to one but it was a missionary meeting; and my lovely old Lady of the Manor, already in the eighties but looking a fresh and rosy sixty, told me with a rueful humour how at some such party she had been implored to join the Young Abstainers' League.

There was no bridge in those communities, be sure. They must have looked on Chipperfield as a Pagan place. At a great house where these peculiar tenets were held my dear old Lady was so dismayed by the solemn silence at the luncheon table that she asked without premeditation the ridiculous question "Why did the fly fly?" "My dear," she said, "I had to answer it myself, and I know they thought it *most* unbecoming. I could almost have cried if it had not been so funny. They thought me *such* a fool."

We used to walk to Mass on Sundays when we did not drive. Our nearest church was at Boxmoor, five miles away. The walk lay through fields and woods, past old manor-houses, through a churchyard and out by a lych-gate. Our hope had been that Father Gilbert Dolan might establish a little mission close to us, but there were too few Catholics and the plan came to naught, even though I asked Lord Rothschild for a donation towards it! He wrote me a very civil reply.

Those were good Sundays when we walked through the fields to Mass. There was a most delightful old priest at Boxmoor. Father Hardy. I hope he is there still, for the sake of the world, and not in Heaven. He was one of the Oxford converts and had been a parson. Since he became a priest he had devoted assiduously himself and all he possessed to setting up little Catholic missions up and down Hertfordshire, which, before his coming, must have been a desert place indeed for the Catholic strayed within those Low Church borders.

Even the most fanatical Low Churchman, I think, must have respected Father Hardy. He was, when we went there, no longer officiating at the little church at Boxmoor. It was then in the charge of a gigantic Irish priest, and Father Hardy looked after his latest mission at Berkhampstead, still living at Boxmoor in one of the two "condemned" cottages he had bought for a song. The Irish priest lived in the other, complaining only that such a residence was incompatible with the dignity of the priesthood.

Father Hardy was worshipped by his congregation. It was an oddly assorted congregation. A few English aristocrats, one or two Catholic shopkeepers, a few Irish poor, one or two convert ladies—for the rest, millhands, who came less from religious motives than because Father Hardy had been good to them or their parents before them. Many of these had no claim at all to be considered as Catholics. Many a one came on winter evenings because of the lit church and the warm stove.

The big Irish priest, who had his work cut out for him to please his parishioners when he succeeded Father Hardy, used to comment humorously on the flock. It was not an unknown thing for the boys sitting round the warm stove to converse, to crack nuts, even to whistle, during Father Hardy's sermon. Father Hardy would stop and look down the church. "Is that Tommy Byles that's whistling? Tommy, my lad, whistle outside: it shows a cheerful heart—but not in the House of God."

He had an absolute Terror of a woman employed to clean the church. She was not even a Catholic: the only motive he could have had for employing her was that no one else would. She was a hardy perennial in the lock-up. Father Hardy always bailed her out and paid her fine. It was no wonder he often had an empty pocket. When sterner people tried to impress on him that his ways with the backslider were too gentle, that if she had to suffer the penalty of her ill-behaviour she might mend her manners, he would agree cheerfully—and even contritely. But—there was always the "but"—he would wriggle out of it. "But, my dear fellow, she is a good poor creature at heart; and she has lovely children, and though she has no religion of her own she sends them all to our school." "Because no other school will have them, seeing the rows she kicks up periodically." "Well, well, I daresay that's true, but still . . . "

He was over seventy then, but he was as bright as a robin. He had a dandyish air, for he always wore spats on his shoes; he was careful about his linen, and his clothes were carefully brushed if they were rather old. We used to meet him stepping briskly up our hills. Even in the hinterlands of Hertfordshire there was here and there a Catholic, too old to cover the long distance to the church, needing Father Hardy's ministrations.

My last memory of him is of a winter evening when he came in and played with the children, a dear, beautiful old child himself. I can see his rosy, benign old face laughing as he went out of the lit warm schoolroom into the dark night on his long tramp back to Boxmoor. The children were struggling with the beginnings of a language which now none of us want to learn. He had given them a phrase to repeat for their father when he should come home, which was to delight him with their proficiency. It was " Du bist ein aisel." The priests were the best of children's playfellows.

Chipperfield was very kind and bright and beautiful. After the first strange loneliness—for coming to live in the country I missed my father at every turn, as I had not missed him in London, with which he had nothing to do—I was very happy there, happier than at any other of our English homes. Looking back on it the shadows drop out and only the brightness remains. And now for the one whose presence gave such a sweet and lovely dignity to the place that was hers, with whom so many of the graces and the courtesies must have passed : so that when she was gone one remembers Chipperfield as it was when she was at the Manor House, without desiring to live there again, since her place is filled by others.

CHAPTER XXV

THE LADY OF THE MANOR

We had been at Chipperfield nearly three months before the Lady of the Manor came to see us. She had been spending July and August in the Highlands. But everyone had assured us that we should love her. Someone said one day to someone else in our hearing that she ought not really to be allowed to walk up Whippendell, as she did always, alighting from her carriage at the foot of the hill and walking to the top. " She will strain her dear old heart and it is not strong."

" She thinks she must give an example to other people," said someone else. " She says to the men who drive the flies from the station and those big wagonettes that take out picnic-parties in the summer, ' You must make your fares get down at the foot of the hill. If they say anything tell them that the Lady of the Manor always walks up.' "

Now I was fascinated by this last saying. There was such a simple pride in it, such wit, too, to appreciate how the high-sounding title would impress the Londoner to whom " an 'oss is an 'oss." It was as though she said " Tell them the Queen walks up." She would have made a beautiful old queen. She had in her veins the blood of one of the finest Elizabethan poets and gentlemen, and his manners could hardly have been more beautiful and stately than hers.

I was uncertain beforehand as to whether she would be friendly. I had heard that she was a very strong and uncompromising Churchwoman. Would she have anything to say to a Papist? I took it for granted that she would not; and I remember a day when Paddy, the Irish terrier, went rabbiting in her woods, and how alarmed we were at the vision of the reckoning we might have with her. She was so amused when I told her this later. "I wish you had been brought up before me," she said. "How glad I should have been to give you tea!"

It happened on a day when Alice Meynell was with us and we were sitting out on the lawn that the carriage of the Lady of the Manor drew up at the gate. She came across the grass, a fine erect presence, not a sign of age about her fresh rosy face, handsome and dignified, with eyes of youth like Sweet Anne Page. She was at that time over eighty. Some years before she had had the Pastoral Players in the Manor House garden, and a great gathering of her friends, to commemorate her fifty years' reign. She always dressed in black, but it was black of the finest—heavy black silk, with old lace to give it the final distinction. From the moment I looked into her dear face I knew that I was accepted.

A little later the local secretary of the—something or other—League, a very pretty, fashionable young lady, who had a kennel of French poodles, invited me to deliver a lecture on Tariff Reform. I consented, being what John O'Leary used to call "faultlessly ignorant" about Tariff Reform, and the venue was the Manor House garden. An obliging man was found to write the lecture for me, and I stood up before an audience of ladies, in the beautiful old garden, on one of those glorious days of Indian Summer which made up for the wet summers, and talked about the Big Loaf and the Little Loaf. Now I think of it, it was the Women's Conservative League, and there were a number of the village women present. I wonder if I imposed on them.

Anyhow they had a good tea, and I suppose I was worth listening to for that.

I was rather shocked that afternoon at the sight of the Lady of the Manor carrying chairs for her guests and waiting on them like a footman. I did not know her then—her indomitable will, her almost passionate sense of hospitality and courtesy. Later on I, like those who were there that day, did not interfere when she waited on her guests.

It was a beautiful old English garden. We sat just clear of the two great mulberry trees, their many wounds bound up with iron, which would have spattered white dresses as with heavy blood-drops. Beyond the lawn on which we sat was a pond of gold-fish, a pleached garden alley wandering between herbaceous borders and a double line of fruit trees. The most ancient part of the house, *circa* A.D. 1400, was at the back. The front was comfortable Queen Anne, behind its gate and railings of fine floriated ironwork. Within the house was panelled in oak, all low and ancient and beautiful, just the Lady's proper setting. I cannot imagine how it must look with ordinary every-day people in it. That afternoon she took me away from the others to talk. We went into the beautiful, dim oak-panelled drawing-room where the chairs and sofas were covered in rose damask. Each side of the fireplace had arched and shelved recesses filled with old china. On the chimney-piece I remember blue cows—Staffordshire ?—and a pair of candlesticks of Battersea enamel, with many other curios. On the wall near the fireplace was a portrait of a stiffly-laced Tudor child, in white satin, a prim little cap on her head.

"Little Mary M——," she said, "the only child ever born in Chipperfield Manor House. She died at five years old." Then she spoke of the secret sorrow of her heart. She had no child to succeed her in the place she loved and adorned.

After that we became very dear friends. Chipperfield was a cheerful unintellectual place. She alone stood for intellect, and she had been the admired friend of many of the great men of her day. But all the pleasant kindly people were welcome to her old Manor House, where the dignity of life was so beautifully exemplified. She had a great feeling for hospitality. She entertained constantly, and she liked to be entertained. She used to say of a house that did not entertain: "That, my dear, I call a wasted house."

We dined with her very often, and we used to bring all our visitors to see her. She said she liked to see people who did things. There was something fragrant and gracious about the old house as about its mistress. Londoners felt it a great delight and distinction to be taken there. Her doors were so wide open to her neighbours—she had a queenliness, a motherliness, which would not allow that anyone should be lonely or neglected within her borders—that some strange people felt it no distinction to go where so many went. I have even heard it suggested that she was not sincere because her manners were so beautiful. "She always seems when she talks to you," said the grumbler, "as though there was no one else in the world but you. Now she could not feel that about everyone, could she?"

You certainly always felt that you were the most important person in the room to her. Perhaps sometimes you were. It used not to occur to me to doubt her sincerity at those moments. I have said that her doors were opened widely. They were, literally as well as figuratively. All summer her house-door was never shut. The iron gates had to be opened to you when you rang, but the hall-door stood wide.

There was a quaint reason for it. When the heat of summer dried up the Pond of the Twelve Apostles on the Common—the Twelve Apostles were tall trees round the pond : one had fallen and a smaller one was growing up in its place—the frogs marched down to the little river running through King's Langley. There was no nearer water in the chalk country ; and the direct way was through the Manor House and its garden. No one hindered their progress. Sometimes they went by single frogs, sometimes by battalions. I have seen one myself in his buff jerkin hopping through the beautiful old hall with the air of one who sees his goal and goes straight for it.

I remember a summer evening when Mrs. Meynell was with us and we went to dine at the Manor House. It was very warm, and before dinner, we sat out on the lawn at the end of the garden where meetings of one kind or another were sometimes held. The Lady of the Manor walked about, trailing her heavy black silk over the grass. Her hair was just greying—no more than that. She had old lace about her shoulders and a wisp of old lace on her head. The fine, rosy, handsome façe, so firm almost to the end, was full of interest and pleasure at having so distinguished a guest. It was ridiculous to think of her as in the eighties. " Sixty, K. T., surely ! " Mrs. Meynell said.

Into the dining-room, where the windows were open and unshuttered because of the heat, there came that evening a strange light and mingled with the soft candle-light. It was about the time of the longest day. We talked of the long twilight and how it lasted. I can see the room now, low and dim, and rich, with the beautiful white and gold and blue china, the lit candles, the fruit and wine, and the stately gracious old figure at the head of the table.

Presently we discovered that the lingering twilight, as we had thought it, was in reality a very fine Aurora Borealis. They played croquet in the garden till after 10 o'clock—the younger ones—while we sat in the drawing-room, the pale green light flowing in by the open windows.

We walked home in that strange day. The village was fast asleep, but the great tongues of light were rising up splendidly from the north, high in heaven, so that you could have read a printed page by it at midnight. We told Mrs. Meynell that we had procured the entertainment specially for her. One might not see the like again in a lifetime.

Sometimes one met old and dull people at the Manor House, among whom the dear Lady shone like a star. She could not have enjoyed their society, but they needed change and rest and the atmosphere she created about her—and that was enough. Her favourite word was "kind." "But *how* kind!" she used to say. When the sad end came and we went back to Chipperfield for the funeral her adopted daughter said to us: "You know what Granny would say, 'It is *so* kind of you to come.'"

Once in the early days we met her driving up a steep hill—or rather one of us met her. At the station she met the other and mentioned the meeting on the hill. "I hope my wife knew you," said the other one; "she is so very short-sighted." "Oh, indeed, she did; I was so sorry I could not stop the horses to speak to her," said the dear old Lady, adding: "I really ought to begin to wear glasses myself, but I think spectacles so ugly, and I am not sure a pince-nez would suit my face."

Another day as I drove with her she envied me my power of walking. "I used to walk to Watford and back till I had an attack of that wretched influenza about ten years ago. I never was able to walk so well afterwards."

She had a heart for anything. Several times she accompanied us to Whitefriars, or other public dinners. I can see her now running along the railway platform to the carriage, scorning our help. I do not think anyone enjoyed those dinners so much as she did. She used to sit there smiling, her face bright with enjoyment and interest. She loved a jest. Once as we went down from one of those dinners she spoke to a person who was a total abstainer, a thing she abhorred. "I told him I had been to *such* a gay dinner with plenty of champagne," she said, "and he had been dining with one of the City Companies." "It must have been the Drysalters!" I said. Another small joke of mine about the children. "They will climb the trees and slide down hills so that their clothes are in a disgraceful state. It is a consolation that a walk up Whippendell always means any number of pants" pleased her immensely. She was also greatly tickled by the perfectly serious question of one of my small boys: "Why are the papers always talking about the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill? Bill is not a lady's name."

She was delightfully game. When the same turbulent small boy had made an unprovoked attack on a preternaturally large boy for his age, who, on a birthday, attired in black velvet, sat on a dais with a canopy over his head from which a crown depended, she was delighted. "I heard it was a glorious fight," she said; "and I was so glad the Chipperfield boy won."

The same pugnacious boy systematically ran away from boarding school. Public opinion was oddly divided about this practice. One could have told beforehand the one who would recommend flogging, the one who would be pitiful, the one who would be amused. I remember speaking of the runaway at the Women Writers' Dinner where those within hearing at the table included Lady Randolph Churchill, "Frank Danby," Mrs. Meynell, and one of Sargent's beautiful "Three Graces," who was my guest. There were others, but I cannot now remember them. These ladies were unanimous in their horror at the stony-heartedness which had returned him on the first occasion to his school. I felt a real monster of cruelty under their accusing eyes.

Contrariwise, at a Chipperfield garden-party the male opinion was dead against the culprit. "Did you try the stick?" asked one of the party, while the others stood round like City Torquemadas. I was goaded to deceit. "No," I said carelessly. "After all, every Prime Minister of England we have a record of ran away from school." "Is that really true?" asked one. "Most certainly it is. You can easily ascertain its truth for yourself."

I had a pleasing vision for some days of the City men consulting the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (out of date) which, with a revolving bookcase, made a part of every well-equipped home.

On the occasion of one of these runaways a terrifying thing happened. It was following the time the runaway had been sent back. He ran away again, and contrary to all precedent he did not come home. We went out seeking him in agonies of apprehension. On the road we encountered the dear old Lady driving, and she stopped to speak to us. We told her the boy had run away again. "My dear," she said, "but *how* flattering to you!" Then she went on to tell us about her brother who had run away from school seventy years ago and had tramped fifty miles, and coming in hungry and weary and cold had been caught into his mother's arms.

"Don't send him away again," she said. "There are some children who belong to the mother; and they make no worse men and women when they grow up for that."

I have said she hated the total abstainer. It was a part of her bigness, the thing that made her a strong Church and State woman, a staunch Conservative, detesting Little Englanders and Peace Parties and Ritualism and Woman Suffrage and all such new-fangled things. She had turned down her favourite parson because he became a total abstainer. I wonder, if she had lived to these days, whether she would have banished wine from her table.

She always took her glass of wine and liked others to take theirs. There was a certain famous punch brewed for the tenants' dinner which was for gods and fighting men. The secret of it was well kept. She would say: "My dear husband always said that if you took a man's beer from him you should give him a beef-steak in its place."

She loved to quote her husband's opinion, referring everything to his judgment as in his lifetime. He had been dead some years. His portrait, by Richmond, did not persuade me that he was such a man as she was a woman. She was old-fashioned enough to accept the husband's headship of the wife unquestioningly and to delight in the acceptance.

She was always to be seen about in her open carriage no matter how cold it was. Younger women who had the privilege of driving with her used to complain of the thinness of the rugs; she never, apparently, felt cold. Even in the bitter north and east winds that sweep over the Hertfordshire plateaux you would find her driving along behind her old horses and her old coachman. When she drove us to and from the station, as she sometimes did, she would never consent to my getting out to walk, even up Whippendell, and her will was law. When she anticipated driving us she always had the pair, for it would have been against all her code of manners to have permitted her guests to walk up a steep hill, even though she did it herself at nearly twice their age.

Someone who had often been her guest said to me once that if anything unkind was spoken at her table she did not rebuke the one who had spoken. She simply changed the conversation.

Perhaps she hardly suffered fools gladly. I remember an occasion when a very silly girl was telling of the rich marriage made by some young woman. "Would you believe it, dear Mrs. ——, she is to have twenty thousand a year settled on her, just for pin money." I looked up to see the old face light up with a flash of humour. "What a mean man!" she said. "Why not fifty thousand?"

There was a portrait of her at the Manor House, *circa* 1832, with her brothers and sister. She had lived at a most delightful old house in King's Langley village in her girlhood. She would make casual references to those days. Perhaps once a year she and her sister, with their father, went up to London by the coach. There was a Coronation—Queen Victoria's I suppose. She described her frock—flowered muslin with a poke bonnet and a fur tippet and muff, and black slippers with an elastic cross-over.

Again there would be a memory of her marriage. It had been a romantic marriage. There had been little money in the house at King's Langley, and the young Squire of Chipperfield was rich, and deeply in love, as well he might be.

"The day I was married," she said once, "there was an arch of roses spanning the street from there to there." And again: "The day we were married, as we drove down the hill, my dear husband missed a pocket-knife he was very fond of, and he kept wondering what could have become of it. At last I said to him 'Robert, I really believe that you think more of your knife than of your bride.'" It was so pretty to think of the coquetry of that dear young bride of sixty years ago.

Once there was a very pretty girl there who was looked down upon by local society because her papa was in some sort of retail trade in London. It was very like a bit of Cranford. The local ladies occasionally condescended to ask the poor little girl to their houses, but the note of condescension was ever present. People were kind to her as a virtue, apparently. I wonder what she thought of it. I once caught a swift telegraphy of the eye between her and an equally pretty young cousin when the most patronising lady was especially patronising, and I could see how the sense of humour made even patronage bearable.

I was not there when a ball was given to which all the countryside was invited—among others, the pretty daughter of the man in retail trade. My dear Lady, though incapable of any little-mindedness herself, was very much aware of its existence in others. It made quite a sensation when it became known that that little D—— girl had actually received and accepted an invitation—it came from someone who was so highly placed as to be unaware of the difference in rank between Miss D—— and her patrons. Poor Miss D—— was probably quite unaware of any reason against her going. She adored her papa. The only time I heard her speak above a breath was when she told a tale of a thick fog in London and a father who did not come home. The sheer emotion made her unconscious of the hostility of her audience. "Poor creature!" said a lady to me afterwards. "Imagine so much fuss about such a man! Why it would have been a mercy if he had never come home." I never saw Mr. D——, but since he satisfied his daughter no one else need have minded.

There was great indignation, however about Cinderella going to the ball. They were as angry with Miss D—— as though she were a viper nursed in their bosoms that had turned and stung them. There was a movement to boycott the little girl who did not know her place. Under dire pains and penalties none of the male friends and belongings of the ladies was to ask Miss D—— for a dance. Meanwhile Miss D—— could hardly keep her feet from dancing in anticipation of the joy to come. She had gone up to London for a new frock. Her father had been very generous about it. It came from a very good shop—pink silk, trimmed with pearls. The other ladies who had a frugal mind thought such a dress quite unfitting Miss D——'s humble position. The little girl was dark-haired with a vivid pink and white skin. She was going to look adorable in the pink silk.

The arrangements for her ostracism at the ball were fairly complete when the tale reached my dear Lady's ears. She said nothing at all, though I can believe that her eyes flashed. She merely whipped up all the agreeable young men she knew for the ball. She sent her carriage for the D——'s—Papa also was invited—who had found all the hackney carriages engaged, and, since none of their more fortunate neighbours would give them a lift, must else walk to the ball.

She gathered the two under her wing as soon as they arrived. "That man," as the other ladies called him, was past dancing age. So he sat by the Lady of the Manor.

The dear Lady, who always had a court of young men about her, whispered to one or another: "I want you to ask Miss D—— for several dances. I am extremely anxious that she should enjoy this ball."

Little Miss D—— had the night of her life. She was obviously the rage. Persons of a social distinction to make them ignorant of or indifferent to the fuming ladies, who sat like Cinderella's sisters watching the triumph of the humble, fell over each other in begging dances from Miss D——. As for Mr. D——, he never suspected he was "That Man." Singled out for special honour by the Lady of the Manor, and introduced to all manner of people he would probably have called "nobs," he was at least as happy as his daughter.

Part of this story the Lady of the Manor told me herself. Part of it I was told by others. Chipperfield must have enjoyed the affair. It was certainly much more broad-minded than the villages around.

Then there was Father Gilbert Dolan. One day when we were going to dine at the Manor House a telegram came announcing Father Gilbert's immediate arrival. It was not to be thought of—great-souled and hearted as we had found her to be—that she would welcome a Catholic priest to her board. It was equally impossible that we should leave him. We sent a note explaining what had happened and begging her to excuse us.

A note came back, almost peremptory in its insistence that we should come and bring our guest. We brought him. Well, he was very charming. He was splendid to look at. She began by treating him with all honour. She went on to being obviously delighted with him.

After that time when he was with us he was a most welcome guest at the Manor House. He always occupied the place at her left hand—even when the Vicar was present. She used to talk of Father Gilbert in a raised voice when someone was within hearing who presumably would have objected to a "Romish" priest. "And how is that charming Benedictine Father? What a delightful man! I said to Lady —— the other day—she said they had such a very delightful priest at L——. 'My dear,' I said, 'I am sure he is very agreeable, but he cannot be so delightful as the Benedictine Father who does us the honour to visit us at the Manor House.' I always call him *my* Father."

CHAPTER XXVI

MAINLY LETTERS

It was on the 18th of November, 1907, that a telegram came to me from Wilfred Meynell :—

"Francis Thompson dead. Letter delayed. Will you pay tribute to him in *Pall Mall.*"

The letter followed :—

"Dearest K. T.,—You will mourn over your laureate, but rejoice to know that he died in perfect peace. His last smile was given when I mentioned Alice to him and he had some violets of hers sent her by George Meredith put on his breast before we buried him at Kensal Green this morning. How much he admired you, dearest K. T., and yet how little he could do to show it, which is the case with most of us.

"I love your article on Lionel Johnson and I am wondering whether you will be able in the *Pall Mall* to pay honour to Francis's memory.

"Always affectionately yours, with love to Harry and all

"W. M.

"P.S.—I should have written earlier only I was too worried and sad."

I know ; and I never could say enough for the infinite patience, the all-forgiving tenderness, which it was the poor poet's happy lot to receive at the hands of Wilfred Meynell especially. That was a great day for him when he sent "Dream Tryst" to *Merry England* and followed it up by a haughty demand for its return when the acknowledgment was not immediate.

The priest who nearly attended Francis Thompson on his death bed and did not, told me years afterwards that he could not forgive himself because he had missed being the one to minister to the dying poet. He was hurrying along the corridor of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in St. John's Wood one dark November day on his way to keep an appointment—he had been attending some patient spiritually—when a nun intercepted him.

"Could you look at this poor man who has just come in, Father?"

"I am in a great hurry. Father So-and-So is in the house."

There was the lost opportunity. He only learnt later that the man was Francis Thompson. The nuns who nursed him reported that he was "all brow," and that his wide-open eyes looked ever upward. They heard him talking to himself, saying the same thing over and over. At last they discovered what it was: "My withered dreams, my withered dreams!" My informant added further that the doctor who attended him said that from the effect of narcotic drugs upon him he could have had no great quantity in his lifetime; and that may well be true.

Looking into "Sister Songs" I find a precious possession I had forgotten. It is Thompson's Victorian Ode, written for the *Daily Chronicle* at the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It is a booklet "Privately printed at the Palace Court Press," and is inscribed:

> "To Katharine Tynan Hinkson,
> Ten years ago my sympathizer
> When I had few sympathizers
> "FRANCIS THOMPSON.
> "Christmas 1897."

In looking up my notes of what the priest told me about Francis Thompson's dying days I come upon another paragraph which concerns another poet. An Irish Jesuit told me that Father Gerard Hopkins, also a poet, had told him that Coventry Patmore submitted to him, for his opinion a chapter of "Sponsa Dei," the book which he intended to be a prose following-up of "The Unknown Eros." Father Hopkins read the chapter as a complete paper, not knowing there was more to come. When Patmore asked his opinion of it he said: "I should burn it if I were you. People won't understand it and it may do harm." "Very well," Patmore said, and went off without protest. At their next meeting Patmore said: "I took your advice and burnt the book." Only then did Father Hopkins discover that he had doomed a complete book to the flames.

On one of those days at Chipperfield I, sitting out on the gravel sweep in the shadow of the house, writing, received a letter signed "W. E. Gibraltar," which I thought a very odd name. It was only after some scrutiny that I discovered the Bishop's mitre in the corner of the letter. It ran:—

> "Dear Madam,—I am venturing to ask a favour of you although a complete stranger to you. Some four years ago there was a poem of yours in the *Spectator* beginning "She only died last week," which I cut out and preserved, but lost in a note-book which I somehow mislaid in Spain about two years ago.
>
> "Would you, of your kindness, tell me in what volume the poem is, if it has been republished? Or enable me to recover it in some way?
>
> "You will understand why I ask when I say that my dear wife, Mary by name, only died last week.
>
> "Believe me with many apologies,
>
> "Yours sincerely,
> "W. E. GIBRALTAR.
>
> "July 24, 1909."

I sent him the poem; and a letter of a few days later says:—

> "The poem has been so much in my mind and I am glad indeed to have it in full again and above all now. I cannot tell you

how much it has moved me in a bereavement which is what it is because of our entire devotion to one another, but which has all the earnest of joy that comes from looking beyond separation and death. Perhaps—who knows ?—I may be able to thank you in person some day."

The next letter is dated August 8th :—

"How am I to thank you enough for your letter and this volume of beautiful poems. I am reading and re-reading with such thankfulness and such a full heart. *Everything that I Made* touches me most for it is the very picture of our life ; and we had only got into this house just a year to the day, before she went home, and most of that year we had spent abroad. But there are many more I specially love,—'The Children'—and 'For Your Sake' and 'Introit' and the beautiful 'Man of the House.' . . .

"We have always been everything to each other and there is only us two, so that our parting leaves me more destitute than such partings often do. But the greatness of the happiness we have had, helps : for those who know that love is all and Death is nought cannot but look beyond the things that pass to the things that endure. In some of my rougher journeys too I have had to be parted from her ; so I try to face it as another journey, longer and sadder, but without the anxiety there has been.

"I should like to come and see you some day if I may. At present every moment is filled. But probably at the end of August, or early in September I shall have a day before I start on my journeys.

"You add another to my many friends of your Church. We are all children of the One Father.

"Yours very sincerely and gratefully,
"W. E. GIBRALTAR."

I was very interested in my Bishop. About that time the Anglican Bishop was making his pastoral visitation to Chipperfield. His flock was invited to meet him at an "at home" at the Vicarage. Naturally enough I was not invited ; and meeting the dear Vicaress on the road one day I pretended to reproach her. She was all pretty fluttering eagerness to assure me that I should be welcome if I would really care to come. I pretended to toss my head. "I don't want your Bishop," I said :

"I've got a Bishop of my own and I shall ask none of you to meet him."

This retort of mine very much amused the dear old Lady of the Manor.

But after all the Bishop and I never met. He was already close upon the end of his earthly journeys and the beginnings of his heavenly one towards her who had taken all his joy with her.

Sometime in those Chipperfield years I had a design to write upon my younger brethren in Ireland. Poetry at the moment was out of favour in England. Hardly any editor would look at a poem, nor were the publishers kinder. It was the swing of the pendulum towards material prosperity and away from spiritual things. The fluctuation of poetry as I have known it is that, we are paying a bill, as we were after the South African War, so poetry is a thing of naught. The bill being paid, we begin to have leisure for pictures and books, so the Arts revive. In course of time we begin to be over-prosperous and art becomes *decadent*. Wealth and prosperity supply the patrons for the Arts, but not long do the Arts remain healthy in days of luxury. There has to be a purging before the creative spirit arises, clean and new. If the South African War had been a bigger war I believe that it might have made poets instead of crushing poetry almost out of existence.

During those first ten years of the century, especially after we had left Ealing and the almost exclusive society of literary people, the remoteness of poetry from actual life was an overwhelming reality. None of those pleasant people at Chipperfield—or very few, beyond the Lady of the Manor, Mr. William Archer, who lived at King's Langley but was not of it, and James Payn's daughter, who lived at Bovingdon—knew that I wrote poetry.

I used to say I was quite sure that in all that countryside no one read a poem from year's end to year's end.

I have lived, to myself, by my poetry; or verse if you will. My innumerable novels were for boiling the pot. Not that I despise boiling the pot. The business might bear a worthier name. It might even be called a Holy War, the struggle to keep the fire on the hearth for the children and the securities and sanctities of home about them. But my novels I wrote usually not to please myself, but to meet the demand; and the demand was diversified. Sometimes I wrote against the grain, as when I must purvey sensations to please the readers of syndicate stories. My poetry, such as it is, I kept undefiled; and a good many people from time to time have liked to drink at its well. But during those years at Chipperfield so profitless had poetry become, or at least my poetry, that I wrote it almost by stealth, with a feeling that none wanted it but myself.

In Ireland they were making poetry all the time. A new young school had sprung up, with dear A. E. as its centre. It did not mind any more than a robin in winter whether the times were propitious or not. It had achieved its art at a bound and it went singing for its own delight.

I wanted as far as might be to write the young ones up. I wrote to Seumas O'Sullivan and he gave me a list of names and addresses. Maunsel sent me the books. All was in train; but the poets themselves would not answer my letters. Padraic Colum told me when I mentioned this fact to him later that it was a convention among poetic young men in Ireland to have bad manners. I suppose it was part of the pose, of the Bohemianism, the long hair, the soft hats, which we used to call "God save Ireland" hats when they appeared first. I cannot say how many of my letters remained unanswered. I think it must have been the whole first batch, since I was so discouraged. They were not written to the most or more important of the young poets. These last were helpful, even to the elusive Seumas O'Sullivan, who did everything but keep an engagement to come to see me when I was in Ireland on a visit.

The article never got written, but I find some letters from George Russell and W. B. Yeats concerning my project. Reading over this of A. E.'s I realise that he and I had not kept up with each other beyond a few letters during the years of my exile. Of course the letter is dated only "Friday." It must have been some time in 1907.

> "It was a great pleasure to hear from you again, for it set my mind running back, I am afraid to think how many years, to Whitehall and the Sunday afternoons I spent there. I asked Miss Mitchell to write to you a couple of days ago as I was in the thick of my co-operative conferences and had not a moment to write. I have asked Maunsel and Co. to send you all the verse they have published lately and you will get from these booklets some idea of what the younger generation are doing. Colum, Seumas O'Sullivan and Campbell are the best. There is a boy named Stephens who has published no volume but I havè great hopes of him and will try to arrange for a selection from his lyrics for some publisher shortly. Miss Mitchell, whose little book of satires I send myself, has also another little book of serious verse in the press and I hope proofs of it can be sent before your article is written. I think some of them very good. The books I am sending you myself are poems by Eva Gore Booth. 'Aids to the Immortality of Certain Persons in Ireland' by Miss Mitchell. 'New Songs,' a selection, edited by myself. 'Sunset Town' by Paul Grogan, the last a curious book, full of promise, written by a young friend of mine some ten years ago, and I don't know what he has been doing since. He was a boy when these were done and I thought there was great promise in them. Miss Gore Booth writes too much, but she has flashes and splendid lines occasionally. Please return these to me when you have done with them. The copy of 'New Songs' is not mine but borrowed. Maunsels are sending you other books which you

can treat as review copies. I hear that Synge the author of the 'Playboy' is publishing a book of verse through Miss Yeats. I have not seen any of them. W. B. Yeats tells me they are good. Perhaps they may be set up and you could get a look at the proofs by writing to Miss Yeats. Synge ought to be good. I think also you should read Boyd who has a splendid if irregular talent. D. J. O'Donoghue published a book of his verses and I would send it but I have lent or lost my copy. I cannot trace it. He wrote some splendid things. He was once a member of the Irish Literary Society in London. Jane Barlow I hear has published a new book, but I daresay you know her verses. I cannot think of anyone else. But I am sure much as you love poetry you will be glutted with what Maunsel will send you along with those sent herewith.

"With kind regards.

"Yours in old friendship,
"GEORGE RUSSELL."

After that I must have sent him my volume "Experiences," for here I give a second letter, with apologies for making public these pleasant things about myself which I so dearly value.

"28, CLARE STREET, *Friday*.

"My dear Katharine Tynan,—I was delighted with some of the poems in 'Experiences.' I like 'Memory' perhaps the best of any of them because I have a memory of your good father stored away. You have such a wholesome kind of heart. Nearly all the writers I know give one the impression of having a blight somewhere or a canker in their heart and their sadness seems the melancholy of disease rather than the natural mirror of life. I don't know how you manage to keep so sunny all through. I have not written more than two cheerful poems in my life, and I would love to write cheerful poetry more than anything. But no matter how I begin or what ticket I get at starting, I am always, in my verse, discharged at the Town of Melancholy and can't go any further. And personally I am cheerful enough. I have discovered a new poet in a young fellow named James Stephens who has a real original note in him. I am going to try to get Maunsels to bring out a book of his lyrics next year. The greatest pleasure I find in life is discovering new young poets.

"With kind regards from yours ever,
"GEORGE RUSSELL."

Turning up these letters I discover with them some letters of W. B. Yeats's concerning the early days of his theatre. They must have belonged, I think, to 1906. Yes, for once the poet dates his letter—December 1, 1906.

> ". . . I would have written to you before, but I have had a desperate three months of it, writing for the theatre and doing its business. We are beginning to get audiences. Last winter we played to almost empty houses. A sprinkling of people in Pit and Stalls. Now, we have big Saturday audiences. Last Saturday we turned away people from all parts of the house. My play 'Deirdre,' after leaving me doubtful for a little, is now certainly a success. It is my best Play, and the last half of it holds the audience in as strong a grip as does 'Kathleen ni Houlihan,' which is prose, and therefore a far easier thing to write. The difficulties of holding an audience with verse are ten times greater than with the prose Play. Modern audience has lost the habit of careful listening. I think it is certainly my best dramatic poetry, and for the first time a Verse Play of mine is well played all round I think the Irish accent in blank verse is rather a shock to whatever ordinary Theatre goers find their way to us, but they will get used to it. Miss Darragh, an Irish star on the English stage, who is playing for us, says that our pit is a wonder; she never knew a pit listen to tragedy with such silent attention. I think that we are gradually working down through the noisy and hypercritical semi-political groups to a genuine public opinion, which is sympathetic. . . .
>
> "I have been reading your old letter and I agree with what you say about Nora Chesson, and the way our Irish Fairyland came to spoil her work, but there is one exception. There are a couple of lovely verses inspired by it in 'The King of Ireland's Son.'"

All these beginnings are precious, so I make no apology for quoting some more about the Irish Theatre. The Spanish play he refers to must have been "Mosada," which I remember as very beautiful work. He has never reprinted it.

> "I am working very hard at my Play 'Deirdre.' Mrs. C—— saw my prose version and asked for the play, but after a struggle with temptation I decided to keep it for my own people. I

think it is my best play. I remember you were the first person who ever urged me to write a play about Ireland—I had shown you some wild thing I had called Spanish. After I have done a couple of little plays written to complete the cycle of plays on Cuchullan which I have planned, I shall go back to lyrics and narrative poetry for a bit. This dramatic work has been a great joy. Small as our audiences are they are Irish and well pleased. We had an audience at Longford that would have stirred your imagination—shop-keepers and lads of the town who smoked and were delighted I think. I wonder if I had this dream of an Irish Theatre when at Whitehall—I had it very soon after, I know—in 1892 certainly. I am doing my 'Deirdre' side by side with a curious impressionist book on the work here—almost a spiritual diary."

Chipperfield was the period of my English life during which I was most constantly in touch with my fellows and sharing their interests and amusements. If it had not been for the chalk we might still have been there, though it could hardly have been the same without the Lady of the Manor. Oddly enough, among those whose society contributed to the pleasantness of our life there were Lady Ernest Hamilton and Mrs. Willie Ryder, great-granddaughters of Lord Edward Fitzgerald and cousins of the Wyndhams. By another curious coincidence my collaboration in a Flower Book brought me another correspondent who stood also in the same relationship to the most winning of Irish patriots. I was to have gone to see her at Maidenhead where she lived, to be shown some relics of the patriot whom his descendants, whatever their politics may be, are agreed to worship, but somehow I never went.

With these other two ladies and their children we had picnics on Dawes Common, a delicious little gorsy wild place overlooking the placid flow of the Chess between Latimer and Chenies. I have some photographs in which figure these descendants of Lord Edward. The boys are bacchanalian, with ginger-beer bottles held to the mouth for the purpose of photography. It was very innocuous revelry. One remembers that scene in Lady Sarah Napier's Letters where "Eddy" and "Donny" and the two Colonels came home, as fine gentlemen often did in the eighteenth century, "stupid as owls." One little boy, a great-great-grandchild, was very like in looks to what the little Lord Edward must have been. He was dreadfully and refreshingly frank. At a children's party at our house he refused to make friends. Finally taking his departure he cheered up. "Good-bye," he said, "and thank you for the nice party. All I know is that I'm not coming to this house any more."

Other agreeable neighbours were an artist husband and wife who had a little house in which the Lady of the Manor had once lived, with a huge garden and orchard in which in spring countless daffodils, narcissi, and wild hyacinths danced and shone. They were a very quaint couple—unworldly and aloof from the world around them. They were absorbed in their pictures and their delightful, solemn children, who were pictures to look at. They were very fidgety about health. The question they asked before taking the house was, "Would you mind telling me what disease the previous tenant died of?"—to which the dear old Lady responded with twinkling eyes, "Of old age, my dear."

The children knew a great deal about disease. The delightful Paul—a child of the Christmas books, with the wild fair hair of Struwelpeter—looking on at a magic lantern exhibition, explained aloud the case of an animal whose tail was lopped off in the picture. "His tail has fallen off from a most terrible disease," came gloomily on the darkened room. Once he brought us a letter. "Did you come all by yourself?" asked one or our boys. "Weren't your father and mother afraid that you might meet a microbe on the way?"

In all things that concerned the upbringing of children the artist and his wife were painfully interested. Rain, hail, or snow they attended the gatherings of a Children's Welfare Society (I am not sure of the name) which met at Watford. While they were absent the children played under the wet orchard trees.

The subject of the magic lantern reminds me that one of us once manipulated the lantern at a Tariff Reform lecture in the village. It was a deplorable performance. The day happened to be Mr. Chamberlain's birthday. " I am now going to show you the greatest man in the Empire," said the lecturer. There was a pause—the only sound was that of the slide being adjusted. Then the picture was thrown on the sheet—Mr. Chamberlain, orchid and all, standing on his head. The next was the Big Loaf. It came out Liliputian. The Little Loaf. It was a loaf for giants. The lecturer was visibly annoyed. Her voice shook as she spoke. The third time: " You will now see on the screen the greatest Empire since the world began—on which the sun never sets." The British Empire came out the size of a penny-piece. It was all so well-meant, and the Vicar was doing his best to help with the lantern. The lecturer said that she was not sure that the lantern added at all to the success of the lecture.

Once in those years, coming back from Ireland, where I had been lecturing at Cork, a third passenger entered our carriage at Holyhead. It had been a most dreadful passage, and we had been very glad to scurry into the dry, warm carriage. We were both sitting facing the engine. " Oh, please," he said, " would you mind very much if I sat down between you. If I sit with my back to the engine I shall be train-sick."

He was a tall, clean-shaven, rather fat young man, looking like a lost æsthete from the 'eighties. Of course, we implored him to sit between us. He let the wind and the rain into the carriage while he called to the boy from the newspaper stall: "Boy, boy, bring me the *Acawdemy*. *Not* the Acawdemy pictures, but the *Acawdemy*." We got to know that call well during the day, for it was repeated at every station.

He went off to his lunch before we did. We were all hardened travellers and ready for our lunch despite the disgusting passage. When he had gone my husband pointed silently to the address on his valise. It was that of one of the dearest houses in the world to me, which I went to no more, since she who made it what it was had gone to Heaven.

Presently we were all back again from lunch. I settled down to correct the proofs of a new novel. I always managed in those days to have the proofs of a novel to correct on that long journey. At Chester we were swarmed over by Americans. Our original travelling companion, whose eyes had nearly jumped from his head when he saw my proofs, was compressed in the most distant corner, at my side of the carriage. The Americans were with us to Stafford. They were making pilgrimage to Lichfield because of Dr. Johnson. I told them various things they ought to see and do and the reason therefor, my proof-reading being stopped the while by the tightness of the fit. The poetic young man leant out and watched my face all the time I spoke with an intensity which I ought to have found embarrassing, but only found mirth-provoking. I looked round the carriage to see how other people took the repetition of "Boy, boy, bring me the *Acawdemy*. Not the Acawdemy pictures, but the *Acawdemy*," but no one smiled. I could scarcely keep my countenance as the same thing was repeated at many stations.

After Stafford we had more room and I returned to my proof correction. I had been at it on the journey to Ireland and the journeys between Cork and Dublin, so that I was nearly finished. By this time the fortunes of travelling had placed the would-be possessor of the *Academy* opposite to us. I dared not look up. I knew he was panting to speak—had been ever since he saw those proofs. At last, just after we had left Rugby, where he called for the *Academy* for the last time, I finished, folded the proofs, looked up and met his eager eye.

" So you never got the *Academy* after all," I said.

Then the talk began. He had opened one valise on the seat beside him. Books burst through it, dainty delicate books, such as flowed from the Bodley Head in the 'nineties—poetry books unmistakably. We talked poetry, careless of our listeners. We had common friends and acquaintances among living, and, alas! dead poets. The talk flowed on and on in a rush. I knew he was palpitating to know my name, but was too polite to ask. I knew his already from the label on his valise. At last, seeing that his endurance was almost at an end, I leant forward, took up the " Oxford Book of English Poetry," turned over its leaves and found my own name. " Me," I said.

He was a poet too and a distinguished Fellow of King's, Cambridge. He wrote to me afterwards that the hours flew. We were to have visited him at Cambridge. He was to have visited us at Chipperfield. The visits never came off. I have watched some of his doings with interest. He is as I write in the trenches.

CHAPTER XXVII

MALVERN

In our last summer at Chipperfield we had a most delightful holiday trip. I do not know why we went, just at the beginning of May, when the beauty had come after the dearth of winter. There was Father Gilbert Dolan at Little Malvern wanting to see us, and we to see him, and so we all went off to Malvern one chilly May day by motor—ourselves, children, governess, and dog.

That was a truly idyllic time. After all I think I do know why we went. It was one of the little tender mercies of the Hand that guides and gives. I would now not have missed that May and June at Malvern for a good deal. As I look back upon it, a benediction seems to lie over the peaceful days in the lovely place, with the constant society of the beloved friend whom we learnt to know and love better as the days passed, in that greater freedom of his—for at Ealing he was leading somewhat of a Community life, whereas at Malvern he was independent.

Alice Meynell wrote to me, while I was at Malvern, a memory of her first visit in girlhood to the exquisite place. They had arrived one night at the Foley Arms. The next morning her mother led her to the window, drew up the blind, and bade her look. "It is the very heart of English beauty," she said.

It was very good, the swift motor drive in the chilly wind through Herts and Bucks and Oxfordshire, through

Warwickshire—we lunched at Broadway, with a thought of Mary Anderson—and on through the Cotswolds and down into the Severn Valley; and presently we were running along the side of the Malvern Hills, the steep hill on one side—on the other that wonderful vision of beauty the vale which stretches between the Malvern Hills and the Cotswolds. They say you can see thirty miles over and along that valley—thirty miles of gardens and fields and farmsteads, and church towers and lovely hamlets, and silver river and woods and commons. The great Castlemorton Common lay just beneath us. It was intersected by silver streams twined in and out like the ribbons of a maypole. A great bleating of sheep and lambs arose from it and the incessant calling of plover. The whole hill was quick with birds and the gardens masses of clean colour—young green leaves, clove-carnations, forget-me-not, wallflowers, thick clumps of poet's narcissi.

For a little part of the way there were still villas in their flowery gardens. Then the road forked. One road went steeply up over the hill; the other dived downward. Our car took it like a flash. There were no more houses except an old gatehouse by the side of the road. There was a sharp curve and the road went down into the valley steeply; the car went like a flying arrow. Suddenly it pulled up at the gable-end of a little cottage-farmhouse.

They call that steep hill the Pitch. It is very sheer. I used to offend a self-conscious little boy by walking up it backwards when I knew it better. The first time I walked up it I treated it as any other hill. I thought I should never get back my breath at the top. There was some exhausting quality about the Pitch. It was not really so sheer an ascent as Whippendell. Perhaps it was the trees which made a darkness upon it—an air-less darkness. Midway of the Pitch, coming or going, there was rest and refreshment for you if you were such a one as might ask it. The squires of Little Malvern, belonging to the old religion, sent none away from their doors without an alms and a meal. Perhaps it was a trust handed down to them from the White Friars of the old Priory, part of which has been long incorporated with the Court, while the Priory church stands cheek by jowl with it.

The gable end of the farm promised no great things. There were three tall poplars and a small garden gate. A friendly sheep-dog stood wagging his tail inside the gate. A little woman came out to welcome us. We passed within.

There was a tight-packed cottage garden, flowers and vegetables and fruit, all wedged together as tightly as they could grow. Right in the middle, facing the house, was an apple tree at its utmost perfection of pink bloom. It did not show a leaf. It was more like a tight cabbage rose than anything else I could think of.

The little house, wrapped up in ivy, had a benignant air like the hostess. The windows were as so many kind old eyes looking down upon us. The little woman, with a gentle deprecating face, led us within. There was a dining-room one side of the hall, a sitting-room the other. A flight of steps ascended to spotlessly clean and neat rooms. As we went up a tiny altar of Lilliputian figures faced us. Higher up the Madonna, with a blue lamp at her feet, turned her back to us ascending, her face towards the delicious country. Each of the bedrooms had its altar. There was always an altar where there was any possibility of having one. Referring to the gradation of the figures Father Bernard Murphy, whom we knew later, used to say that the altars represented the various stages of religion.

Nothing could be more idyllic than the atmosphere of the place. Our hostess had been cook at Downside College. One rather wondered that cooking on a large scale had not spoilt the delicacy of her hand. It had not. She cooked excellently, and we lived in a land of milk and honey. I have never known such abundance of milk. You could have bathed in it if you would. The hostess was pathetic in her desire to please. She had, in the first place, asked us a ridiculously small sum for the maintenance of the family and governess, not excepting the dog. Under protest she accepted an addition to the sum which just saved us from being highway robbers. We lived royally. We were waited on by a girl with a face full of peace and innocence, who necessarily was called Mary: no other name would have fitted her.

If we sent any dish away unfinished—and one had to where so much was provided—the face of our hostess was overclouded. She would have a secret interview with the governess and beg for her guidance for the future as to our likes and dislikes. She used to send Mary off on her bicycle to Worcester or Upton to purchase us asparagus and young peas and strawberries before her own garden afforded the like. It was a business arrangement to laugh at. She only thought of what would please us, and set it before us regardless of cost.

Her little face when she said "Ah, I'm afraid I haven't given you what you like!" was something to hurt you, like the wistfulness of a child or a dog who has not pleased.

There was just one fly in the ointment—it was the butter. Because of infrequent churnings the butter was rancid. The whole party discovered mendaciously that it never ate butter under any conditions. Surely it was a case in which the recording angel might drop a tear and wash away the white lie. She never thought of doubting, although she said that a family that never ate butter must be almost unique.

There was a loutish husband in the background of whom we saw little—we adults; the children accompanied him on his daily round of feeding calves and pigs and milking the cow and all such farmyard matters.

Presently the whole valley was like one great may-bush with the may. I never saw such a blossoming before. The thirty-miles valley was full from end to end of whiteness. Everywhere the little streams were singing on their way. The fields were green with the greenness of semi-marsh. The plovers were flying tamely about the cottage calling to each other all the day and night. The nightingales were singing. In the evening we heard the nightjar whirring on the wooded hill. The fields in which we walked below the hill were so threaded with small blue flowers that while May lasted their colour was rather blue than green. There were all manner of birds with which we were unfamiliar, besides the familiar ones. Then there was the ever-changing beauty of the hills. Malvern Hills are a single range, quite unlike the Irish hill country, which you approach gradually. They had no mysteries, but they were very beautiful. The only drawback of our idyllic cottage was that the hills hid the sunset. We were in the shadow while the sun was slowly descending in glory behind the hills. When you had walked up and over the hills you had the sunset, but dwellers there were debarred the sunrise.

The country was very sweet-smelling. The beanfields close by yielded their delicious scent when the may was over. The nights were heavily scented. We used to walk in the fields under the hills and sit on a stile and hear, as it were, the very heart of England beating. The Spirit of Place was in those fields. She did not wring her hands and cry like the Spirit of Place where a battlefield once was. Under the hills and the old Priory tower the tale she had to whisper was of quietness. You heard the soft susurrus of her breathing at your ear with the quiet noise of the cattle feeding and the movement of little life in the hedgerows.

The very heart of England. It beat there under the quiet Malvern earth. And yet—was it all of peace the Spirit whispered ? Not so far away was Tewkesbury ; and to the Priory at Little Malvern fled Margaret of Anjou in the moment of her worst need of shelter.

They are lovely hills. Halfway up there are hanging woods, going higher and higher, one line above the other. When you have climbed to the top you can look along the range to the Worcestershire Beacon, and if it is evening see its base strung with jewels which are the lights of Great Malvern.

But perhaps the best moments of all were during the Mass at the Court on Friday mornings. There is something wonderful about the atmosphere of an old house which has always been Catholic. So I have seen in the ladies of some old Catholic families a strange cloistered beauty. There is something withdrawn, austere, ascetic and yet kindly, in the atmosphere of these old houses. It seems out of place, jarring, to move noisily or speak in a loud voice. As you go along the corridors you will come upon one which has a light at the end and a green baize door. Beyond will be the chapel, from which perhaps flows the quietness, the something of the finger on the lip in the air of the house.

Coming from outside we mounted a small flight of steps to a door in the wall, reminding somewhat of a door in a high granary wall. The door standing open let the sunlight pour in. At the far end of the passage was the expected light. The green baize door faced you.

You went in. The chapel was very light and bright. There would be a few kneeling figures. Through the open window you saw the ancient wall of the oldest part of the house, and the tourelle at the corner, all warm cream-colour like the wall of a Roman palazzo.

If you looked up you saw a trap-door above the altar, the entrance to one of the three priests' hiding holes the house contains. It is very obvious now. It was not so obvious, doubtless, when it was constructed by the Jesuit lay-brother, Nicholas Owen, otherwise "Little John," who was responsible for most of these hiding-holes in the old "recusant" houses of England, nor when it was in use.

My thoughts go back to those mornings of early summer. Through the row of windows opening outward comes the chatter of starlings in the ivy, of martins under the eaves. A warm glow is reflected from the wall across the courtyard, making the chapel golden. The little congregation is very reverent. Father Gilbert, a great figure in his vestments, is saying the Mass. The squire kneels at the altar-steps serving, a country gentleman in country homespuns with a ruddy honest face.

Once it fell to my lot to answer the Mass, a thing I had never done before. Father Gilbert had given me his missal and I was happy in my office, although somewhat fearful about it, when someone came and relieved me, thinking I should be nervous.

There is something heavenly about one's memory of those occasions. One used to walk up to the Court through the dewy sweetness of the morning amid a succession of cheerful morning greetings from the tramps, getting up, and making their simple toilets along the roadsides. Between Ledbury and Upton-on-Severn workhouses the casuals broke the journey to sleep at the gates of the Court, to enjoy a free breakfast and receive an alms before starting on their way again. The comfortable prospect before them made them usually very genial. They had lovely beds in the roadside grass, dotted thickly with all the English wild flowers and many a flower to which I could not give a name.

Father Gilbert came often to talk with us and to stay for a meal afterwards, and when he left we used to walk up through the sweet dusk with him nearly to his own gate. It was he who taught me to take the Pitch backward—" reversing engines," he called it. I daresay it would have looked rather ridiculous if anyone was there to see. Once or twice he went away and we missed him. His place was taken during his absence by, according to our little hostess, " A Passionate from Broadway one Sunday and a Nasturtium from somewhere else the other." She meant a Passionist and a Cistercian.

It was a very gentle place. The Hertfordshire children were rude and rough, and their manners were not improved by the " Fresh Air Children " from London, who used to come down every summer, bringing many undesirable things to the villages. The little lads and maids of that pleasant Worcestershire country dipped when they met us and patted fearlessly the head of a yapping dog. No degeneracy there !

What evenings they were when Father Gilbert dined with us, or we went up the hill and dined with him in his high house which overlooked the valley ! He had a wonderful garden; and the house, which had been bequeathed to the Benedictines by a very old lady and gentleman, had nothing in it that was not old. One very hot day I took up a fan of what seemed to me pink paper of quite a common make and carried it off. I happened to notice later that it was painted with a little flying cupid, carrying a scroll on which was inscribed "May God Save our King!" I took it to be a relic of some festivity in a Coronation year. Whose Coronation? William the Fourth's at latest. And to be sure pink paper would never have stood the years, for the fan is still quite intact. Other trifles which I annexed were the cards of a game which doubtless had a great vogue at the Wells in the eighteenth century. The cards correspond, with question and answer. One asks: "Where is a lady likely to meet her lover?" And the answer is: "On the Margate Hoy." "At the Vauxhall Assembly Rooms." "At the Tower Stairs coming by water from seeing the lions fed"—all in the most exquisitely minute handwriting. An ancient card-case with a picture of a seventeenth century ballroom and a very, very foxed Rules of Whist, I acquired among unconsidered trifles.

Father Gilbert was a great story-teller as nearly all priests are. So was Father Bernard Murphy. There was an elderly maiden lady who could recall to you the Dublin of the 'fifties and 'sixties.

"I was one of eight girls who came out that winter from Upper Mount Street alone. The people could not sleep at night because of the carriages driving up to the doors bringing us back from our dances.

"One day I went into Lambe's in Grafton Street—the florists, you know. And Mrs. Lambe said: 'A gentleman has ordered a bouquet for you, Miss. He knows you come here every morning.' I really did not know where to look. Well, I took the bouquet, and most fortunately I had my key of the Green and I went in there—looking like a peony, I am sure; and I found the Green almost empty, for the nurses who had the key of the gates preferred Grafton Street. And—just as I expected—there was a declaration concealed in the bouquet.

"Some very silly girls used to walk up and down the pathway outside the United Service Club on the Green, pretending they did not know that all the men were in the windows quizzing them. It was the time of the peplum skirts and the boots with tassels, and there was a great deal of talk about ankles and a great display of them at croquet. But, of course, the girls who did that sort of thing only made fools of themselves and were disrespected by the men."

And so on: the old lady loved to talk about her lovers and the gay soldiers who wore Dundreary whiskers. Can one imagine a soldier nowadays in Dundreary whiskers?

I think that with all our knowledge of Father Gilbert we had to go to Malvern that time to learn him through and through. His health had already begun to fail. After Ealing there had been Redditch, where he had had a bad breakdown. He missed his friends, his various London societies, all his activities. He was essentially an urban person. He had not the student mind, though he thought he had, and the company of his kind meant a lot to him. He had had a dream of going to Rome as Abbot—now Cardinal—Gasquet's secretary. It could not have materialised because of his sight. Those big blue eyes were never quite satisfactory, and he had to have a cataract removed from one in later days. After that dream was given up, and he realised that if he lived a future of activity would be impossible, he had his other dream of ending his days under our roof with his friends and the children he so dearly loved. That dream, too, was to have no realisation.

Malvern, beautiful as it was, was quite the wrong place for him. At one side of the house rose the hill like a high wall. On the other one stepped from the radiant garden without warning, into a little place of graves. He always jested at nerves, but nerves, I think, lay between the hill that shut out the sky and the little graveyard. At times he had attacks of pain so acute that he could only lie on a sofa, get up and walk about and lie down again. We have come in when he was lying exhausted after a paroxysm and he was up in a second ready to talk or walk with us. As for the children, on his worst days he would fling off the pain and suffering and join in a wild game up and down the front and back staircases, from which he would emerge, exhausted but happy. I think there was hardly a moment of his life in which he would not have laughed. Children he always found irresistible. He was giving two small children religious instruction at that time. I often wished I could have been there to hear. There was a certain toy pig he had given them which they insisted should share in the instruction. She wore a bonnet and was called Mary Pigg, which made her, I suppose, a personality. All he could give he gave us, of visible, actual things; there is not much a monk can give away. But of invisible spiritual things . . . ah, well! those he is giving us still.

I see him against the background of beautiful Malvern, splendid, big, benign, in the habit of the Black Monks of St. Benedict, which he would never wear at Ealing, although we used to tell him that he would be such a splendid recruiting sergeant for his Church. So I see him the day we left Malvern, a wet chilly day, standing there looking after us as the motor began to move. It was the last time we were to be together in a leisurely friendship when we could meet constantly and at will. Oh, I am very glad we had that holiday at Malvern!

CHAPTER XXVIII

SOUTHBOROUGH

It had become necessary for us to leave Chipperfield, the dear, bright place and the kind people, because one of us could not live on the chalk, and so before our three years were up we were house-hunting again. For myself I was resigned to go. I had begun to be haunted by the thought of a dead bell blown across those high uplands and a funeral train wending its way from the Manor House to the churchyard, which stood so cheerfully on the Common, its low walls not shutting away the dead from the living. The Lady of the Manor was failing. She died in the autumn of that year, 1910. She might have had a dozen years or more of life, she was so splendidly hale; but the wet summers and a disagreement with the people about Common rights, which she took dreadfully to heart, hastened her going.

Hitherto it has been summer at Chipperfield; but let me record a winter memory of her as she appeared at the opening meet of the Old Berkeley Hunt, which always took place on the Common in front of the Manor House. When the people were gathered—the horsemen and women moving about, the people a-foot and the people in carriages, the huntsman and the whipper-in with the pack whimpering and whining to begin, the beautiful Manor House gates would open, and the Lady come forth to welcome all and sundry. A couple of servants followed with a famous old cherry brandy and other light refreshments, and everyone came to have a word before the signal was given and the riders drew in behind the hounds and the vehicles followed and the people on foot. She had the sense of the pageant. The scene made a delightful picture.

Was it that last year or the year earlier when it poured pitilessly on the day of the Eton and Harrow Match, which she had always attended as a national event, like the Boat Race or the Derby, or a Coronation or a Royal Marriage ? She had seen the match for many years—not so many as her neighbour at Callipers, Mr. Broughton, who had played in the match in 1832 and captained Harrow in 1836. He looked on her as a chit, and resented at ninety-five not being asked to her bridge parties, and the open-air summer dinners in the Manor House garden which were so delightful. She was so unhappy, so disappointed, watching the skies for a break, that at almost the last moment the guest, who might have been her granddaughter, said : " Let us go anyhow. We shan't get wet." And go they did : and my dear old Lady enjoyed it the more intensely because she had come near to losing it. " It was so kind to understand how dreadfully disappointed I was feeling. I really believe I was near tears."

The Common dispute might easily have been arranged. Something was taken as a right which she would gladly have conceded as a privilege. She was very jealous of the Common rights and not for herself, not even for those of her husband's blood who were to succeed her, but for the generations yet unborn to whom Chipperfield Common should be as it had been to their forbears, " a green thought in a green shade." The fact that she had no child to follow her made it more incumbent on her to concede nothing that might take the Common out of safe keeping in years to come. She was up against the people ; and she felt it bitterly, as one feels injustice, knowing the magnanimity of one's own heart. Then the Common was fired one night, an east wind night of March, and she sat in her old Manor House with bitterness in her heart while the fire broke out in a dozen different places, running like wildfire over the beautiful place she loved like a living thing.

After all the fire did little harm. Before it was extinguished by many willing hands it had burnt out a deal of old undergrowth. When the leaves came and the gorse it was more wonderful than ever. But she was not the same. She was too great for the poison of bitterness. She could still tell us as a jest that one of the villagers had said to her when she wondered about certain symptoms: "W'y it's old age, that's wot it is, and nothink else"—although she did not like it. Indeed, she banished from her presence someone who thought he had a right to refer to her age, asking him if he had ever paid a penny for his manners.

It was time for us to go before that bell should come tolling across the fields. We had found a house at Southborough, Kent, having fallen in love with the glorious view from the hill over the Weald—only less beautiful than dear Malvern—and with bright, clean Tunbridge Wells, its Pantiles, and all its many historical associations.

It was a grief to her when we went, though she was too great-hearted to sadden us by her grief. The strongest expression she made of it was when we had been gone some time and she wrote: "When I am driving past your house I always turn away my head."

Our last meal at Chipperfield was at the Manor House; and the children and their governess remained with her till we had "got in" at Southborough. That very last day was a day of gloom, for King Edward had died the preceding night. She was such a strong King's woman that she was bound to feel it as something affecting her health and happiness. It was a sad last meal while the bell tolled from Chipperfield Church and the flag hung at half-mast.

Someone had lent us a Clement-Talbot car for our journey to Southborough. We passed through a subdued London—flags everywhere at half-mast, shops shuttered or part shuttered, people moving about with serious, absorbed faces. There were snowflakes in the air too, on the 8th of May—that deceitful jade, as Charles Lamb called the month—and we were half-frozen before we reached the little hotel at the top of Southborough Common, with its great view over surrounding country and its bright cheerfulness. It had what one of the children called a very embracing situation, and we needed all the tonic air could do for us in the days that followed.

We had taken a much bigger house than we wanted, willy-nilly, and it stood in a tree-hung road, surrounded by trees and flowering shrubs. That evening of our arrival, after a meal, we went down to inspect our new abode. Oh, those bitter Mays and Junes of 1907—8—9—10. The green was coming out, sure enough, but the heavy clouds hung almost upon the earth, and the leafy road, so delightful in hot days, was very dark. There is nothing for gloom like a shuttered empty house, on a cold, dark May evening. As we entered one room after another, opening the shutters as we went—they were shuttered up to the third storey—my heart sank. What on a sunny day was a house of a certain stateliness was that May evening a mausoleum.

The next day found all the world in black except ourselves, whose trunks were somewhere on the way, so that we had to flaunt it in colours. If we had only known, it was easy enough for Southborough to be loyally black, for it seldom wore anything else, but we went about shame-faced with a band of crape on our arms, meeting the scandalised eyes of our new neighbours.

The loyal skies donned the black also. When I sat "to see the furniture come in" a few days later I was all but frozen, and one had almost to grope in the darkness of the rooms.

We had chosen Southborough for a view—which we had not; also for Tonbridge School, since a school was a necessity. But people had written to us from all sorts of places: "Have you any idea of the kind of atmosphere in Tunbridge Wells? Do you think you will be happy there?"

I always thought I should be happy anywhere I went, and I was not daunted. Even when I was told that I was going into the cradle of Evangelicalism I was not dismayed. I said: "In a place the size of Tunbridge Wells there must be all sorts of people." There may have been, but I found few who were not of a Lowness that would have made Wesley tear his hair out. Southborough was practically undiluted. The very old and the very Evangelical made up Southborough. On a fine day the old ladies went out in the sun. All the little paths leading up to the church on the top of the Common at which Pendennis was married were full of figures in black crawling along like so many black beetles.

I was told later on that there were six thousand householders in Tunbridge Wells, widows and spinsters. They all wore black and they were all the Lowest of Low Church. We, and the French governess and cook of an old-established girls' school, run by two ladies who were above suspicion, were the only Papistical people in Southborough.

Probably if I had not been a writer I should have been left severely alone—certainly by the great majority of my neighbours. So, at least, I gathered by the demeanour of some old ladies who called on me, and sat on the extreme edge of their chairs, eyeing me with a gloomy suspicion. A good many never called, even of my nearest neighbours; some of these bore Irish names.

Of course, there was a leaven. For instance, at the Vicarage there was no lack of friendliness. The Vicar, an open-air country gentleman, met one like a man and a brother, and his North of Ireland wife, if she had prejudices, had a liking for a countrywoman which surmounted them. There were others. There was the Vicar's charming daughter. There were the aforementioned ladies of the school, cultivated and high-minded, whom I think of with affection. There was Lady W——, the daughter of a Lord Chancellor of England, delicately handsome and erect in her widow's weeds, as she walked about with a swift gracefulness like a young and charming woman—at seventy. She had just begun to learn Spanish as a diversion. Her sons were in the Services, and used to come home to her, bringing a sense of life and energy to the quiet house in its garden; and now and again one met her with a small grandchild hanging on to her finger, on whom her bright eyes rested in love and pride.

Then there were the wife and children of a Chinese judge—I mean an English judge in China, of course—a little woman, with a slender, graceful young daughter and two big sons—one at Oxford, where he was champion heavy-weight boxer, the other still at his public school. We used to wonder how the Chinese judge would endure Southborough when he came home to stay in three years' time. He had been home on a visit and had sent Southborough into fits by suggesting bridge for stakes. An odd touch with old days was that he was a friend of an old friend, Charles Johnston, son of Johnston of Ballykilbeg, who married Madame Blavatsky's niece. He comes into Willie Yeats's letters earlier in this volume and appears as well in "Twenty-five Years."

Then there was dear Sarah Grand. I had met Sarah Grand years earlier at London dinners, but we differed so much on many things that it would never have occurred to me that we should come to be friends. But we did—and she was a green oasis in the arid waste of Tunbridge Wells. She came to see us on the afternoon of a day when we were going up to London for one of the delightful Encyclopædia Britannica dinners. I remember going into the little room off the drawing-room—they were really charming rooms, and I believe they had been the determining factor in our taking the house which so soon proved a white elephant. I had thought of her as something militant; I found her soft-voiced, gentle, delicately feminine, and most lovable. The only masculine quality was a certain simplicity. Her grey eyes had but to look at you and you knew that she was as honest as the day.

There was a strong Suffrage party in Tunbridge Wells. I was caught into the law-abiding one—the National Union of Women-Suffrage Societies. They were on the whole quite reasonable people. I know I *did* preside at a meeting at which it was proposed to resist taxpaying. It was my amiability. I should not have dreamt of refusing to pay my taxes. I don't think the law-abiding ones got much support. The money went to the militant body. We had to rest upon our dignity and moderation. There were certainly some extremely useful members of society belonging to our organisation. There were two Miss Scotts, who came to leaven the old-ladyishness of our road. They were poor law guardians, county councillors and so on, or were going to be anything useful that they were not already. With them you touched the bigger interests of life and the world in the cloistered atmosphere of Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. I remember Sarah Grand saying, that first day, of the people among whom she lived: "If they knew I was passing by they would pull down their blinds."

In Tunbridge Wells itself we had a most delightful pastor in Canon Keatinge. He had for brothers two army chaplains—one happily still living and increasingly decorated, Monsignor William Keatinge. The priest who is also a gentleman, an intellectual man, a man of the world and a human being, is a very delightful person. Canon Keatinge was all these and more. He was—is, happily—the author of a book, "The Priest, his Character and Work," a book to be commended to all Protestants, although it was intended as a book of advice and help to priests. To the uncharitable people of Tunbridge Wells it might be specially commended. It is a veritable human document, written with all the intimate knowledge of the man who is himself a priest. I do not know that he considered himself a preacher or that his flock considered him one. He had not the oratorical manner; but his sermons pleased me better than any I ever heard. One especially on the Passion of our Lord—it was on a Good Friday—was as full of poetry, unction and tenderness as anything I have ever heard or read.

When the Monsignor was with the Canon they always came to dine with us, and the occasions were truly delightful. Monsignor Keatinge was an ideal army chaplain. A man and a brother, as well as a gentleman and a soldier, the soldiers were sure to love him. He told us some very good stories of the South African War. Like all the best priests I have known, these brothers had nothing of the professional manner. They were just gentlemen and good friends when you met them. Of course there were a good many of their flock who insisted on the professional manner.

The poor priests! One of my happiest memories of my English life is that wherever we went our house was a refuge in which the priest could be happy and at ease. I suppose it is the number of converts among the English Catholics who set the somewhat exacting standard for the priest. As though he were not lonely enough without being put up on a pillar like St. Simon Stylites. I remember a convert cook I had in my early married life. She had a way of entering the room noiselessly while we sat at meals. When she surprised our young priest talking at his ease—not in any way unbecomingly, be it understood, but like the simple boy he was—she took occasion to remark sourly: "How nice to see the Father unbend! Who would suppose to listen to him that he had within him such treasures of wisdom and sanctity?"

I am far from suggesting that all converts have such exacting standards, but a good many among them, women especially, are inclined to place the priest on a pedestal, where he is most uncomfortable, poor man! I remember the face of a young priest, one who had the look of a sword that frets its scabbard too keenly, as he said: "There are people who will not regard the priest as a man. For Heaven's sake let us be men first of all." He has been an army chaplain since the war began.

Then there was a Captain G——, a naval captain, sprung of famous fighting blood. He was a convert to the Catholic Church and a very devout one. I once heard a Protestant man who thought piety somewhat unbecoming in men who were not priests—a confusion between pietistic and pious—say of Captain G——

"Despite his extraordinary piety, he is a thorough man." And so he was and is. When he came into a room he brought the sea-wind with him. He had an honest, ruddy sailor face with the keen clear eyes of the sailor man. He said to me once that he did not like the many trees of Tunbridge Wells. He wanted a clean sweep for the wind.

Like a good many people we met from time to time connected with the Services, he used to talk of the Great War which every thoughtful man of affairs knew was coming. He was very pessimistic. He used to say when he came back from official business in London: "They are very pessimistic up there. The Germans will have us."

That first summer at Southborough was not so bad. There were kind and pleasant people as there are everywhere, and we had struck Tonbridge School, where the Headmaster was a connection of our old friend, Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. We saw something of him and his very charming wife and found it very pleasant; and once we were entertained by a number of the masters at a dinner at which I was the only lady, a thing I particularly like.

Once I lectured on Irish poetry to a Women's Literary Society in Tunbridge Wells and found that the poetry made an extraordinary impression. Some of my audience wept for the pathetic poems, which proves my theory that the English are a more emotional people than the Irish. I have repeated the same poems to dry-eyed Irish audiences, although the poetry may appeal to other emotions.

Now and again I went up to London. Once it was to entertain Mr. W. D. Howells and his daughter at lunch at the Lyceum Club. Mr. Howells had long been an admiration of mine, and I have a letter of his dated many years earlier when he had asked me to contribute to, I think, the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, which he edited for a brief period, too brief to admit of my appearance there. Marie Lowndes (Belloc) was also at lunch. We thought it a most delightful function and were charmed with our distinguished guests. They were to come down to us later and be shown the beauties of Tunbridge Wells, which, they considered, justly, as one of the characteristic towns of Europe. We thought they were nearly as well pleased with us as we with them. But—from that day to this—there has been no communication. Sometime during the summer one of us thought he recognised the father and daughter in the Pantiles. A friend whom we consulted on these inexplicable things, who has a considerable knowledge of Americans, said : " You never know about Americans : they are so dreadfully touchy." There the mystery remains, unsolved, probably never to be solved.

While the summer lasted Southborough was not so bad. For one thing there was the extraordinary natural beauty of the place. And the over-big house had a garden, little indeed, but of compensating beauty. The back of the house was rather noble. It had an air as though it stood on a terrace commanding a pleasant prospect of woods and fields. The garden was terraced. It had a row of forest trees. It had a close hedge of privet against which wallflowers and narcissi grew pleasantly in the Spring. There were many roses. A couple of mulberry trees overhung the tennis lawn, on which we pastured two beautiful little kids we had brought with us from Chipperfield. Their names were Johanna and Josephine. Their little bleats used to make the spinster ladies in the road suspect a baby. The back of the garden was cleverly laid out as a kitchen-garden, with old apple trees and rose arches. When you sat under the mulberry tree on the lawn, more, when you sat at the end of the garden at night, it was quite possible to forget that there were houses close by. Only the two children who had been left behind at dear Chipperfield would not deceive themselves when they joined us. They said nothing. Only long afterwards we heard how they used to hang from an upper window to catch a glimpse of green field—the playing field of a preparatory school close by.

There were lovely roads at Southborough, with charming houses hidden away in lawns and gardens. It was enchanting at first view—only, later on, one began to detect something of mouldiness about the beauty; the mental atmosphere perhaps. The country was always beautiful. All that country about Penshurst seemed to have some brightness and glory as from Sir Philip Sidney. You crossed the main road from Southborough to Tonbridge and it was otherwise. There was a long winding lane, two or three miles long, that meandered down into the valley and out by the Old Vauxhall Inn to the Pembury Road. That was the eeriest lane I ever knew. The children and their governess, striking it first, came home with a tale of a place which frightened them, they knew not why. There was no habitation in all its length except two fever hospitals and an isolation hospital. The place had associations with some wicked great lady of the Restoration who lived in those parts. A field called Bloodshots had its weird suggestion. It was only later on we discovered that a particularly foul murder had taken place in the lane. While we were still at Southborough there was a most melancholy suicide there. It was as though some spirit of wickedness walked abroad and made others do wickedness.

On the other side of the main road lay, or lie, Great Boundes and Little Boundes. With Great Boundes

I have no acquaintance. Little Boundes was the house where Wesley visited the Countess of Huntingdon, when he "revived" the Wells and had dear, charming Mrs. Delany to sit under him in the preliminary stages of a pious flirtation. It is a square, solid, cream-coloured house, the walls covered with a trellis, and, within, the staircase and hall lit by a lantern window overhead. There were a number of pretty daughters of the kindly owners of the house, who were not indigenous. The daughters had an air of revolt as we met them walking about. Most daughters had an air of revolt in those parts. The place is for the old and the doers of good works. It is insupportable for the young. Not all the young were so fortunate as the daughters of Little Boundes, whose indulgent parents were constantly taking them away to livelier places.

People from outside, attracted to Southborough by the beauty of the country and the specious air of gaiety of Tunbridge Wells, used to find themselves after a time amazed at the thing that had happened to them. We had barely moved in when the charming old house in a big garden at one side of us received new tenants. Beyond the civility of a call there was no more intercourse. They were Londoners. The poor little pretty woman transplanted from Kensington withered for the change. We had no idea of any touch with the tall young man, till one Sunday afternoon a couple of Irish literary men, stranded in Tunbridge Wells, found us out. One of them claimed cousins with the Londoner next door. He belonged to an historical Clare family. More, we discovered later on that he went about his business with the romantic dream inside him of buying up the stately house from which he was sprung and restoring it to its former fortunes.

When our young neighbours played tennis on Sunday the unco' guid urchins used to climb the walls to shout admonitions at them. We played croquet on Sunday even when we did not want to, and made much more noise than we need have made. I never knew Religion to wear so gloomy a face. The favourite turn at the one place where an entertainment could be held was An Escaped Monk or An Escaped Nun. I once saw a poster announcing a special service for men. The sermon was to be on "All Men are Liars." The poster concluded with the invitation: "All men are cordially invited."

With the coming of the winter the influences became gloomier. All my callers had asked: "But why did you choose Southborough?" And when I assured them—in the early days—that I loved the place, they shook their heads dismally and said: "You won't stay. You may think you will, but you won't. You will see."

We had taken the house for twenty-one years, with a very stringent lease as to what we were to do in the way of repairs while we held the house and before we relinquished it. With the winter I began to be morally certain that I should not see out many of the twenty-one years if we stayed at Southborough. I suppose there may be such a thing as a microbe of old age and dulness—for old age may be very far from dull.

We tried to escape by making an attempt to let the house furnished, not very hopefully. Nothing happened. One day, glancing at the local paper, I noticed an advertisement for an unfurnished house. It asked for more land than we had, and I did not think of it as affecting us and our white elephant. Some days later I mentioned it tentatively. We had never considered letting unfurnished. We looked for the paper with languid curiosity. If it had lit a fire we should have thought no more about it. It had not lit a fire. It turned up intact, against all the chances, in the newspaper rack in the corner. Languidly we answered the advertisement, not in the least expecting anything to come of it. With an incredible hustle and hurry, which left us gasping, an excellent man came in and took the house and all its cares and responsibilities off our hands. He was even more anxious to conclude the bargain than we were.

Never were people gladder to be homeless and dispossessed. A little alarmed too, but exhilarated, we found ourselves one fine day about Christmas-time without a roof to cover us, and the key of the world in our hands.

CHAPTER XXIX

EMANCIPATION

I HAVE discovered of late years, during which I have made many moves, that the secret of perpetual youth is to change your habitation constantly. I cannot imagine how people go on living in the same place year after year. To move often is to make new beginnings.

We had handed over our house so precipitously that we had not had time to consider another house, so we stored our furniture. We had some thought of going abroad, but we wanted a place and a time for consideration, so we went to the hotel at the top of the Common, in the " embracing " situation, to think over things. This involved a breaking-up of the establishment, and that had its sadness. The servants had to go, and they went most unwillingly. The little governess, a frail cockle-shell for the seas of the world, had to go. The cats had to be given away. Johanna and Josephine must be sold. The Shetland pony, Puck, and the old cob, Peter, we kept. At the hotel the dogs were a great difficulty.

Finally someone took the King Charles for us till we should get settled again. I shall always remember the desolation of that Saturday evening when the schoolroom was dark, the little governess having gone off by an afternoon train with the King Charles, and the house was already in cold confusion.

The Aberdeen terrier, John, we took with us to the hotel. He complicated matters by developing what looked like distemper, but might have been heart-sickness, consequent on the breaking-up of the house—a thing all dogs hate—and the absence of his friend Charles. The King Charles was Charles when he was not Golliwog. Then, while I was nursing John in the hotel stable, came news that Charles had bolted from his new home in a frantic attempt to find us, and was lost in London—a pretty thing for a dog who had been a country dog all his days!

We passed a week of misery before the blessed telegram came which told us he was safe.

We had settled down to being very happy at our hotel. We had a sitting-room, one window of which overlooked the roofs of Tunbridge Wells, the other the Common. The room was fuller of bulbs in all manner of receptacles than any room of its size ever was before. We had planted many bulbs that autumn, thinking we were fixed for twenty-one years. When we had given away lavishly there was still a great number left to adorn our sitting-room at the hotel, which the children called the *Hand and Spectre:* that was not exactly its name.

I remember that little room as one blaze of gold through late February and March. It must have been always flooded with sun; and there were the daffodils. After we had moved in and the sadness of breaking-up was over there was a curious sweetness in being all together in that little room, without any intervention whatsoever. The children enjoyed the new emancipation from the schoolroom. Every morning they went off to school. We worked in the mornings after a brisk walk by "Madeira Walk" and the fields round by the wonderful ridge overlooking the Weald. We had the delicious country walk to ourselves. All of Southborough that was capable of movement took the 'bus into Tunbridge Wells.

By half-past 1, or a few minutes before, I used to lay down my pen to look between the daffodils and hyacinths down the steeply-falling path that led into Southborough. Presently I would see the dear figure of a little long-haired girl coming up the hill, carrying a satchel of books. When she caught sight of me she always started to run.

One of those days, before my daffodils had opened, as I went down to do some shopping I met the flower-woman. Her basket was heaped with golden daffodils. She said: "Your little maid, bless 'er 'eart, she do grow! She gave me sixpence this morning for the best bunch of daffs in my basket. She've been sayin' these many days past, 'Mind you, I want the most beautiful bunch of daffodils you can get me for my mother's birthday: and mind, single daffodils. Mother doesn't like them double.' Bless 'er dear 'eart!"

Then I remembered the promise of "something really beautiful" for my birthday. That day when I looked out of the window I saw the little figure running fast, holding aloft a sheaf of daffodils.

That time at the hotel is all daffodil-colour. It had its little tragedies. After we had nursed John the Aberdeen through distemper or heart-sickness, someone at the hotel complained of him and we had to give him away. The day he went down the hill following his master I did not look between the daffodils. He was a dear little dog, full of character, of a quite incredible obstinacy and conviction that he knew better than you did. There were things he would not do nor refrain from doing. When you scolded he looked at you with a calm eye. It said: "You may think you are right; but I assure you, from a dog's point of view, you are absolutely wrong."

He went to Sir Arthur Quiller Couch's sister, who, I should say, from her letters, is just the woman to make a dog happy. But it was a considerable time before we liked to talk about John.

By this time we had made up our minds that the children were not going to be boarders at Tonbridge while we went abroad—we had only pretended to contemplate it—and as Easter was coming and we were threatened with an influx of people, we, with splendid optimism, arranged for farmhouse lodgings down in the valley while we should be further considering. We had discovered the farmhouse on one of our walks—it was like a small Manor House, and there were woods all round it, and the people seemed very agreeable, and summer was coming.

The day we moved to the farmhouse the weather changed to grey and blizzardy. The day before had been very fine. I remember it because, without saying a word to anyone, I had walked through the haunted lane and across the hopfields and through the woods, crossing the railway line to the farm, to recover something which had been sent on there and was required. Only what I considered my righteous anger at someone's unreasonableness would have carried me through this adventure, and I had to keep spurring my anger all the time to get through with it. Loneliness and eeriness are very much magnified for the purblind; and I had not even a dog. It was a great adventure, and when I had got back safely it was worth what I had gone through to bang down the article I had fetched and to witness the alarm my inexplicable absence had caused.

The farmhouse lodgings were like all the other farmhouse lodgings I had tried, except the delectable little Grange at Malvern. We were hardly settled before we knew the impossibility. It was not only the farmhouse and its proprietors, but the mud. It was absolutely impossible to move for the mud. Every approach to the place, every avenue of escape, was blocked by the prodigious mud ; for that was the year in seven when the landlord thinned his trees, and the heavy drays on which the trees were carried had ploughed up the whole place.

I remember so well the dark sitting-room, divided in two by pillars, ancient but not beautiful, and the immense snoring of the frogs in the ponds outside, and the children, who were at home for the Easter holidays, bringing in little handfuls of primroses from the drenched woods. We were there a week : we had to find some other place to go to ; and it was Easter and all the usual places were filled.

It was atrocious weather. One night we dined in Tunbridge Wells and drove in drenching rain. We had brought our steeds with us as well as a groom-boy. When we were coming back I had a terror of the lane and insisted on driving round by the road, although it meant an added three miles or so.

On the Sunday our host of that night, the Good Samaritan Captain G——, came ploughing through all the mud to see how we had got home. He sat with us in the dark room and talked. He was an excellent talker, and he had known men of affairs from the time he could speak. We used to urge him to write his reminiscences, but he could not be persuaded. I remember some of the stories he told us that day—curious stories some of them. Here is one.

" I remember old Sir Aston Cooper Key, a Lord of the Admiralty, telling the story at my father's table. At the time of the Treaty of Berlin, Beaconsfield wanted to secure a place that would command the Eastern position. He thought of Cyprus, and sending for a clerk in the Foreign Office he asked him if there was a harbour there. The clerk did not know, but discovered a very old book in which it was stated that in ancient days hundreds of Greek galleys had anchored in the harbour of Famagusta. If he had gone instead to a naval man he would have been told that Mytilene, with its magnificent harbour, controlled the Bosphorus. So the French had Mytilene, and we had Cyprus, which was no earthly use to us. In order to bolster up the business the biggest ship in the Navy at that time, the *Himalaya*, was taken to Famagusta, and, being brought into the harbour, was turned round as in a basin, the ship scraping the walls of the harbour. It was then reported in the English newspapers, of the new acquisition, that the biggest ship in the Navy could turn round with ease in the harbour."

Other stories he told of the South African War are too nearly concerned with living or recently dead people to be written down here.

Captain G—— is a Highlander, and he has the Highland poetry and imagination. He told me some weird stories of the second sight, which I have laid away somewhere. Here under my hand I find the story of Tam Glen, which may or may not be known to my readers.

"The Urquharts were punishing a smaller clan which had raided their cattle, and Urquhart's daughter had the misfortune to fall in love with Tam Glen, the chief of the freebooters. Urquhart was furious and swore that when he caught Tam Glen,—'May the de'il hae my soul if I don't hang Tam Glen in his boots.' In time Tam Glen was made prisoner, and, without judge or jury, he was led out to be hanged. But there was a hitch in the proceedings, for, before the hanging could be done, Tam Glen demanded to die like a gentleman. 'Hangin' is a dog's death,' said he, 'I maun dee like a chief.' It was conceded by Urquhart, who had forgotten his oath, that Tam Glen should be beheaded. At the appointed hour he was led out to die. He saw the block, the executioner and the axe, without any change of countenance. He knelt down and said his prayers. As he bared his neck for the axe he burst into a great roar of laughter. He laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, scandalising the Urquharts, who stood round in amazement. When he was able to speak for merriment he said, still choking with laughter: 'To think that the Chief gave his saul to the de'il else or he'd hang Tam Glen in his boots. Whaur's yer hangin' noo?' "

On the day we were to return to the amenities of Southborough, where we had found a lodging till a furnished cottage on the Common was ready for us, we awoke to whirling snow. For the period it lasted the storm was the most violent I remember. It drifted too, and filled in the deeply-rutted boreen between high hedges which was our only means of exit from the dreadful farm.

We doubted the ability of our little cob to pull us through the snow, so the young groom went off to Tonbridge in his stable boots to seek for a motor. Contrary to all our hopes and expectations he got one and came back with it; but it stuck in the boreen and the engines got cold; and there we were, worse than ever, with a motor planted in the narrow track, another obstacle between us and civilisation.

However, we started with the strong little cob, the groom-boy walking by him with a spade to knock the snow off the wheels. By that time there was a foot or more of snow in the boreen; a few hours later the drifts were nine feet deep. We had gone but a little way when the cob's hoofs filled in with snow. By the greatest of good fortune we had, among the unconsumed stores we were carrying away from the farm, a roll of butter, with which we greased the hoofs and went on again. It was like Siberia in the wild, whirling snow, in which every second we expected to be stopped, unable to get on or turn back. The motor was still in the boreen, but it had backed a little toward a gateway, and we scraped by.

Once on the high road the worst was over. The gallant little cob dragged us up the tremendous hill out of Tonbridge in the teeth of the whirling snow and the gale, up Quarry Hill and Hangman's Hill, and so triumphantly to Southborough. Be it remembered to the gallant little horse who is now in clover!

It was an adventure to make one accept the skimped accommodation of the lodgings; the thin bed-covering, the exiguous fires, the cheap brightness of everything, the indifferent cooking and serving, the broken-backed sofa, the gimcrack chairs, the Nottingham lace curtains with plush beetles walking up them, the dusty artificial flowers in the vases. After all there was a dear little round-faced girl running the place, perfectly honest and always smiling. A year at the lodgings would have made us rich, so careful was the administration of the food we supplied.

Our hosts were Methodists, but, like a good many people in those parts whose bread and butter depended on their betters, they did not talk much about Methodism and went to the Lowest of the Churches. It used to amuse us that as you entered by the hall door you were confronted by a Church Missionary collecting-box. The same was in the sitting-rooms. When you arrived at the greater privacy of the bedrooms, on every chimneypiece you found a collecting-box boldly labelled "Wesleyan Methodist Missions."

In two or three of the rooms there was a coloured print, or perhaps there were two, "The Broad and the Narrow Way." I believe almost every house in Southborough had this interesting picture or pair of pictures, which I hoped to make my own but failed to do. My uncertainty as to whether there were two pictures is due to the fact that I cannot remember anything about the Narrow Way. The Broad Way represented all manner of people gaily rushing to destruction. Among them was an express-train full of soldiers. The red coat was apparently very wicked. I wonder if that picture still keeps its popularity. But, though soldiers were in the majority, all kinds of persons were going to Hell, from the infant to the grandmother. Perhaps the Narrow Way was concealed in a corner of the picture, such a little and unfrequented track that one might easily overlook it.

At night when my little daughter was going to bed we used to look from her window up the Common with its few twinkling lights. The bitter cold and snow had passed after a few days; and one night the west wind blew fresh and good, and we talked about Ireland, the child who had never seen it and I. The children were always praying to be taken to Ireland, which they looked upon as an Earthly Paradise. The two younger had as yet no knowledge of the beloved country. That night I said, "We shall try to go to Ireland this summer," and the child fell asleep to a dream of bliss.

All this time we had never thought of going back. Why should we indeed? Those who wanted us were dead and gone.

> "The blackbird, he's mocking from the apple bough:
> *Sure why would you trouble to be coming now,*
> *When them that sore missed you is past fear and fret?*
> *Ah, don't you remember? and could you forget?*"

But that night, looking out into the soft darkness of the April night and feeling the west wind—Lionel Johnson used to complain of my poems invoking the west wind in the *Pall Mall Gazette;* he said it always came at my call and made his chimney smoke—I talked of our going back.

A little later we were in a dear delightful cottage on the Common, feeling how good it was to be on our own again after some months of other people's houses. The cottage had belonged to a very old, and I am sure a very good and sweet lady, for her aura yet lingered in it. It was very minute for a family of five and did not admit of a servant beyond a daily one. We had the good fortune to find one who contributed largely to the idyllic feeling of the cottage that beautiful summer, for she was a Nature's Lady; she spoke, moved, and cooked delicately. She was pretty to look at, and she conceived a very fervent attachment for us, so that when the time came to part it caused a pang. She was a most efficient servant in every way. She came early from her little cottage close at hand when her husband had gone forth to his day's labour, and she left us late at night. Nothing could have been gentler and sweeter than her presence in the house, where the space was so constricted that an uncongenial person would have been a trial.

The morning after we got in, in the little sweet room with its bow window overhanging the Common, I heard the first cuckoo. Despite the blizzard of the 5th of April, summer came in with Good Friday in the following week. 1911 was one of the great summers. For us it seemed charged, as I look back on it, with the feeling of coming change, of something good about to happen.

The children went to school every day. That meant an early breakfast. May was heavenly. By 9 o'clock every morning I was out with my blotting-pad and pen and ink on the Common. At first I worked in a delicious enclosure of airy, fairy trees, all in their first wonderful green, on no higher a level than our cottage. No one came to the Common before noon, so I had three good hours before the school-children were let loose and only the birds to be curious over what I was doing. The school-children seldom came my way, nor did anyone else. The Common had a very generous supply of seats and many acres of space.

In that delightful enclosure of May green, with the birds singing all about me, I accomplished a whole novel—one called "A Shameful Inheritance," which I make bold to think a good novel—between the 6th of May and the 2nd of June, and had plenty of leisure for my friends.

Southborough Common, although comparatively small, is very beautiful, and you never come to an end of its beauties. You are always finding some glade, some prospect, some coppice, some little ravine, which is new to you.

By the 13th of June I had corrected the typescript, done some small literary chores which awaited my attention, and had begun on "Molly, My Heart's Delight," a long novel of mine of which Mrs. Delany is the heroine. By June the great heats had come, and I then moved up to the top of the Common and worked at my book day after day. I had a special seat which overlooked the winding paths of gorse and broom, a perfect maze, and beyond, the distant country smoking in the heat. I turned my back to the haunts of men. The seat which was mine that summer was overhung by the boughs of a tree which kept me in shadow through the morning hours. So complete was the solitude between 9 o'clock and noon that I should not have cared to sit there, day after day, if it had not been for the company of the

King Charles, who was again ours. Evil-looking creatures had a way of coming stealthily out of the maze—human beasts, not dryads and hamadryads. They might have been harmless, but they did not look it. It is the trouble of those beautiful commons in the vicinity of towns that the innocence of Nature is sullied by squalid human sins and tragedies. I should have been afraid of someone, something, coming up behind, if it had not been for the vigilant Charles, who believed that the seat and whatever part of the Common I selected belonged to my private estate. I turned a deaf ear to the piteousness of the remarks I heard when the old ladies began to scale the heights of the Common, about the time the sun was well overhead: "Such a nice seat, my dear, with such a beautiful view! And only one person sitting on it, and we daren't approach because of that wretched dog!"

"Molly" got herself finished by the 20th of July, and I submit respectfully that she is not at all bad work. I hope and I think that some of the fresh morning airs of the Common got into those two books, both written inside three months with the ease and joy which come of working in the open air.

Some of my writing friends have said: "How do you do it?" One added: "It is all I can do to crawl into my room in the morning and get a few lines done or none at all." Others said: "How do you contrive to write in the morning? Night is the only time I find inspiration." I used to reply: "Health; regular living; no racketing; and to bed every night by 11." I might have added: "Open windows and life in the open air when it is at all possible."

By the time "Molly" was finished, in the third week of July, after several weeks of torrid weather, autumn had arrived. The withered leaves used to drift on my page. All day there was that peculiar hot-weather sound, the dry pods of the broom cracking in the heat. It was the sound, according to tradition, which betrayed our Lord to His enemies, wherefore the poor broom is among the evil plants. The grass was dead in the earth. Everything was parched and dusty. When the heat was at its worst, as happens in a hot English summer, the clouds massed themselves in a delusive promise of rain that came to nothing day after day.

Our little cottage, with its feeling of innocence, sizzled in the heat, but it was so clean and fresh and high that it never became unendurable ; and at night —at midnight—we used to go outside and watch the lamplighter extinguish the lamps all down the Common, leaving the soft obscurity of the darkness to the owls that were never silent.

Some time midway of that enchanted summer—which seems as far away as though it were twenty years instead of four—May Sinclair came and put up at the hotel and spent her days with us. We made many expeditions together, and dined in the Pantiles in a gallery overlooking the promenade while the band played. She was a quiet little, mouse-like lion for Southborough to stare at ; and we took her to some local functions, where she was very amiable, but more interesting than interested. We went to see dear Sarah Grand at the house of a rich friend of hers who had sixty acres in her back garden in the middle of Tunbridge Wells. Whenever I want to impress the Irish with the wealth of England before the War, I tell them the tale of Sarah Grand's friend, hardly moderately wealthy as the standard of wealth went in Tunbridge Wells, who had sixty acres in her back garden.

There was another person who came and went that summer and played cricket with the children on the Common, who has recently acted a part which shall not be forgotten. Some time in the preceding winter the vicar's wife had asked me to tea to meet the new curate. "Such a good Irishman!" she said. "You will be so much interested in each other." I was rather doubtful about it. The new curate belonged to a militant Irish Low Church family, and since I had come to Southborough I had become militant on my own side—at least when I came up against the other militancy. Still the Vicar's wife and I were friends, so I agreed to go, having protested that we should probably make a battle-ground of her drawing-room.

The new curate was certainly very Irish to look at—he had in fact the face of an Irish priest: he was Irish, although he hated the Pope; and there was enough kindly Irish about him to make me forget my antipathies. And I really think he forgot his.

Of course, his views were very narrow—too narrow even for Southborough—and he banned other people's cakes and ale in a way which made other people rather indignant. But—perhaps it was the Irish—beginning with a strong prepossession against him, I came in time to like him. There was a streak of the poet in him and the visionary. I used to meet him on the Common talking to the cows, and he would observe the birds by the hour together.

It was an odd association between him and the Catholic Irish children, who, as soon as they were free, would sally down the Common to his lodgings and call to him peremptorily to come and play cricket. He used to come as soon as he could and play as seriously as though he were playing for his school or 'varsity. Other children came and joined in, and Father Pat, as we had learnt to call him, used to keep them in order, even the small boy who owned the ball and wanted to go home with it when he was "Out."

Southborough generally came to call him Father Pat, and when he was so addressed publicly he took it very well, ascribing its origin to the proper source, but bearing no malice.

The other day Father Pat, the Rev. Horace Gahan, turned up as the fearless and faithful chaplain of Edith Cavell's last hours, the man to whom we owe an immense debt for his witnessing to that lofty soul. I could have foretold it of him. He would be perfectly fearless, devoted and sincere. A good hand to hold in those last moments on earth. For what he was to Edith Cavell, for the immeasurable service he rendered us by setting her there on her pedestal for us to see plain—Sancta Editha—let us remember and praise Father Pat of the Great Summer.

CHAPTER XXX AND LAST

WE GO HOME

I HAVE said that we had had premonitions of coming change. Living up there on the Common, with what certain English people call "cottage people" for neighbours, away from the *hortus inclusus* of genteel Southborough, we got a new view of things. There was a good deal of social unrest that summer, much talk of strikes and labour troubles; and, being near to the school-children, we became aware of the growing menace of a class hatred. What the children said and did reflected what they heard at home, and if their parents had got no further than being somewhat unmannerly and dour—there as in most places the manners were with the old—the children were very much more than negatively uncivil. We used to talk of the portents when our little daughter had to be escorted to and from school because of the enmity of the board school children and wonder what upheaval was coming. In justice to the people I must say that the old ladies were tyrannous rulers. The shopkeeper who was a Liberal, as most of them were, did not dare avow it for fear of losing custom. I remember the terror of the young groom when during an election he pulled out the Liberal colours by accident with his pocket handkerchief; and when the shopkeepers discovered that we were not as others in the way of intolerance, many a grumble was poured into my ears, to come to an abrupt conclusion when an old lady appeared in the doorway. We used at those times, for a happy medium, to wear the Green, which gave great scandal. "What is this?" a lady said coming up to me and pointing at my favour. "Irish! Oh, naughty! naughty!"

The thing we had come to look for was a class war, a revolution; and we used to debate uneasily, or as uneasily as one could in that golden summer, what would become of us. We could recall the names of so many writers who had gone under. It is so fatally easy to slip out and down. We were always recalling the names of this one and that one—sometimes we had difficulty in recalling them—who had been much talked of at one time or another and had dropped out, disappeared. The crowded life of England began to frighten us. After all, though England had been good to us and was dear to us, we were not English. We were discovering that one's true place and importance is in one's own country. When one remembered the people of whom one said: "What has become of So-and-So? What was the name? You remember that book . . ." one began to be frightened. Even without a social revolution it would be so easy. I, at all events, began to have a vision of someone, among all those millions of people, who might go down and leave scarcely a bubble to show where the last breath had been drawn.

Before we had arrived at that point—while we were hardly yet aware of the people resenting its bondage, we had an impulse one day and obeyed it with the joy with which one does sweet unpractical things—we advertised in an Irish paper for a seaside cottage in Ireland, quite heedless of the fact that Sunnyside was ours till the end of the year. Before we allowed the cold light of common prudence to come into our vision we had secured a cottage at Greystones, Co. Wicklow, for the months of August and September. Of course, it was all the Hand that was pushing us steadily in the direction of home.

Even then the thought of returning to Ireland permanently had never occurred to us. So many of our thoughts and interests were concerned with England. One does not pluck up nearly a score years by the roots with any ease or lightly. But one morning of the beautiful summer one of us lying awake remembered that in the good days when Mr. Wyndham was Chief Secretary for Ireland he had applied for a Resident Magistracy and been placed on the list of waiting applicants. Mr. Wyndham loved to do generous, unexpected things, and he had a great affection for writers and poets and artists and his friends. So we might have gone back that time if the cabal had not turned him out, after which the dream went by the board, and we settled ourselves to the English life without further effort in that direction.

Now the Moving Hand pushed us a little further in the direction it willed us to take. That one of us remembered that his name was still on the waiting-list, and, although Prince Charming and the King of Golden Courtesies no longer played Haroun-al-Raschid to modest merit like ours, the thing was worth another trial.

In August we moved over the whole household to Greystones, leaving Sunnyside to stand empty till our return. The prudent never know the joys of the imprudent if they escape the cares. That was a very joyful moving despite the imprudence, perhaps because of it. We even went to the added expense of travelling by the mail rather than the express so that the children should have their first sight of Ireland as the fairy world she reveals herself to the one who approaches her by Kingstown Harbour of a fine summer afternoon. We had come and gone between England and Ireland pretty constantly, but there was only one home-coming sweeter than that, when we brought our sheaves with us, and that was yet to be.

We left London in sweltering heat. I have hardly ever made that journey without running into rain, and we ran into rain on this occasion. Worse, we ran into wind and nasty weather, and that part of the dream when the children should see for the first time the mountains and the lovely coast line from Dublin to Wicklow Head was not realised. The children for whose delight our plans had been made were fast bound in their cabins. As Jane Barlow said, their home-coming song might have been

> " 'Tis the first glimpse of Ireland with sorrow I see."

However, it was very gay all the same, and we laughed at everything with the fresh appreciation of the difference which one always brought from England. We were stowed away in the train at Kingstown pier and locked in, our fellow-passengers being another exile of Erin and his English bride, as delighted as we were. The two men, in a mood of wildness which would never have happened to them in the staid English years, scrambled through the windows to look after the luggage, and the guard of the train, coming to let them in again, filled us with unreasonable joy by his :

" Will yez for goodness' sake now learn to have some patience. The train's not goin' to go widout ye."

We arrived at Greystones, still in drenching rain, which no one seemed to mind, for the platform was crowded with hatless young ladies in sports coats, it being the height of the season in Greystones, and meeting the train one of the diversions. But next day was beautifully fine, and the air was amazingly lucent after English air, so that you seemed to be looking through water or crystal or some other medium rather than the air you were accustomed to. Jack Yeats, who was our neighbour, said it was the lucency of open sea on all sides of Ireland. In this medium the hills and the fields stood out with extraordinary clearness. Our little house was wrapped up in brilliantly flowering fuchsia, and we had a mountain in our back garden, and Bray Head the other side of the hedge. So the children forgot the miseries of the sea-crossing—and Tir n'an Oge was not a whit less beautiful than they had expected ; and they were soon climbing mountains and making friends with the people and blackberrying and mushrooming in a wider space than England had ever afforded them. The great refreshment was that having left England, or at least Eastern England, dry as a bone and gasping with thirst, they found Ireland full of running streams and the singing of water everywhere.

We were at Greystones more than three months, contrary to all our expectations. The summer visitors went away and their houses were dismally shuttered, and the rain came, and one began to want to push off Bray Head, that shut out the world. I do not know what we were waiting for; perhaps it was for light. We had never up to this time said or even thought that we were coming back unless that was to happen which would require our return, and, although the friend who never failed was working for us, there was no very definite assurance that it would come to pass. I cannot remember that we ever made our momentous decision in so many words. But one day we looked at furnished houses at Dalkey and took one from Christmas to May. . . .

Then we went back to England, leaving one boy behind us at school. The other was at a preparatory school in Shropshire, so we had only the little daughter with us.

We had six more weeks of the English life. There are periods of time in one's life that lie under a benediction. Those six weeks of dark wintry weather in the little house, so warm and sweet, were illumined with the rays of benediction. The peace was something that could be felt. The friend who had never failed was helping us now, and speeding our return to the land which he too loved so dearly—the land which lies under a golden mist for those who love her and have left her.

The glamour was on our eyes and hearts during those heavenly six weeks. We were going *home* for Christmas. I had been accumulating, while our furniture was stored, various things, bits of glass and china, books, pictures, which were to deck the fairy palace of the new home in Ireland. I understood now how it was that I had always held a little aloof from the English beauty, not daring to give it all my heart, saying to it: " You are not mine."

I was very busy during those halcyon days. I know from external facts that it was a wet and dark winter, but I remember the days as full of inward sunshine and peace. The little girl went to school every day and came home like a fresh gay wind. In the quiet hours she read while I wrote. Nearly all " Rose of the Garden," my novel of Lady Sarah Lennox, was written during those weeks. I loved doing it because I saw her through the Wyndhams, through him who was our unfailing friend.

One of those heavenly days, as the Great Day came near, there arrived a large photograph of Mr. Wyndham from Lady Grosvenor. With it there was a letter. As I take it now from the cedar-wood box in which it lies with Mr. Wyndham's letters and the two from Percy Wyndham, the sweet-bitter fragrance of the wood is like the sweetness and the bitterness of life and death.

"Clouds, Salisbury, Dec. 11, 1911.

"I am sending this photograph of Mr. Wyndham with every kind message and thought from him. Your appreciation and sympathy have always been *such* a pleasure and help to him. I thank you for shedding light upon his path."

On the 18th of December we left Southborough, our few regrets—and there were some—swallowed up in an immense happiness. Various incidents of the journey I recall—the jolly naval officer and his two sisters, Anglo-Irish, who travelled with us a part of the way; Tonbridge—the low-lying part of it—under water, as it always is in a wet time. I believe it must have rained as energetically that December as it is raining this day in Mayo where I write, the whole of that dream having come true. All the valley of the Medway was under water as we ran through it. There was the pretty French girl whom we instructed about London, who alighted at London Bridge. We dined with the Meynells that evening, as we had dined with them on our wedding day which began the English life eighteen years earlier. We slept at Euston.

All the time I was conscious of the greatest pity for the people who were not going, who were walking or being driven through the wet London streets. I can remember the look of the big bedroom which had a great four-poster bed hung with red curtains, and red curtains at the windows, and the frowsy London smell mingled with the station smell in the atmosphere. I could hardly sleep for joy.

The next morning there was the getting up by electric light—the streets were dark and miserable with a yellow fog—and the early morning clerks and shop-girls hurrying to their work with pale and joyless faces.

There was the breakfast, the moment of moments when we left the hotel and hurried round to the departure platform of the Irish Mail. How often I had dreamt of it! I had loved Chipperfield, partly because it was on the way to Ireland. How often at Euston Station I had seen the people take their seats in that train, not being aware that they were doing anything wonderful. How often I had watched it run through King's Langley station and looked after it with longing.

> "The people do be in the train, they never know their luck,
> The half o' them is yawnin' or dozin' wid a book:
> Them that'll be in Ireland before the night is come,
> That'll see the Wicklow mountains and the lights o' home!"

That was one of the great moments of life. What did it matter that the day was dark and cold? The dearest little boy in the world joined us at Crewe. Over the passage I will draw a veil. That passage can be a terror, but it was transitory. All through the journey we carried the picture of Mr. Wyndham with us for greater safety. When one's eye rested on it in its packing-case one felt a little happier, if that was possible. One of the first things we did was to set it up in the house overlooking Killiney Bay and all the beauty contained within its crescent of hills. It was the symbol of our home-coming. He had sped us.

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